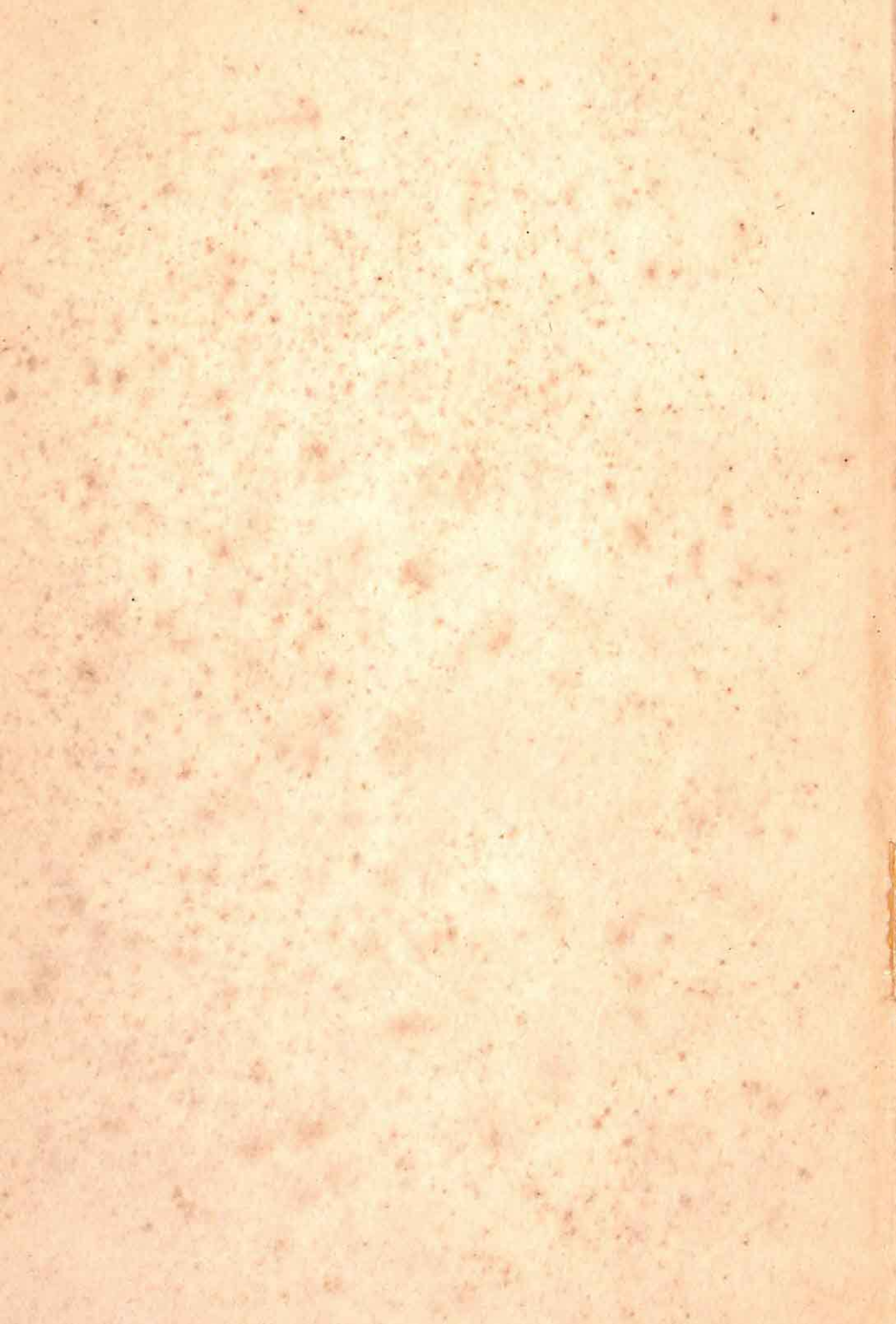


**STUDIES
IN
INDIAN HISTORY
AND
CULTURE**

U. N. GHOSHAL



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STUDIES IN INDIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE



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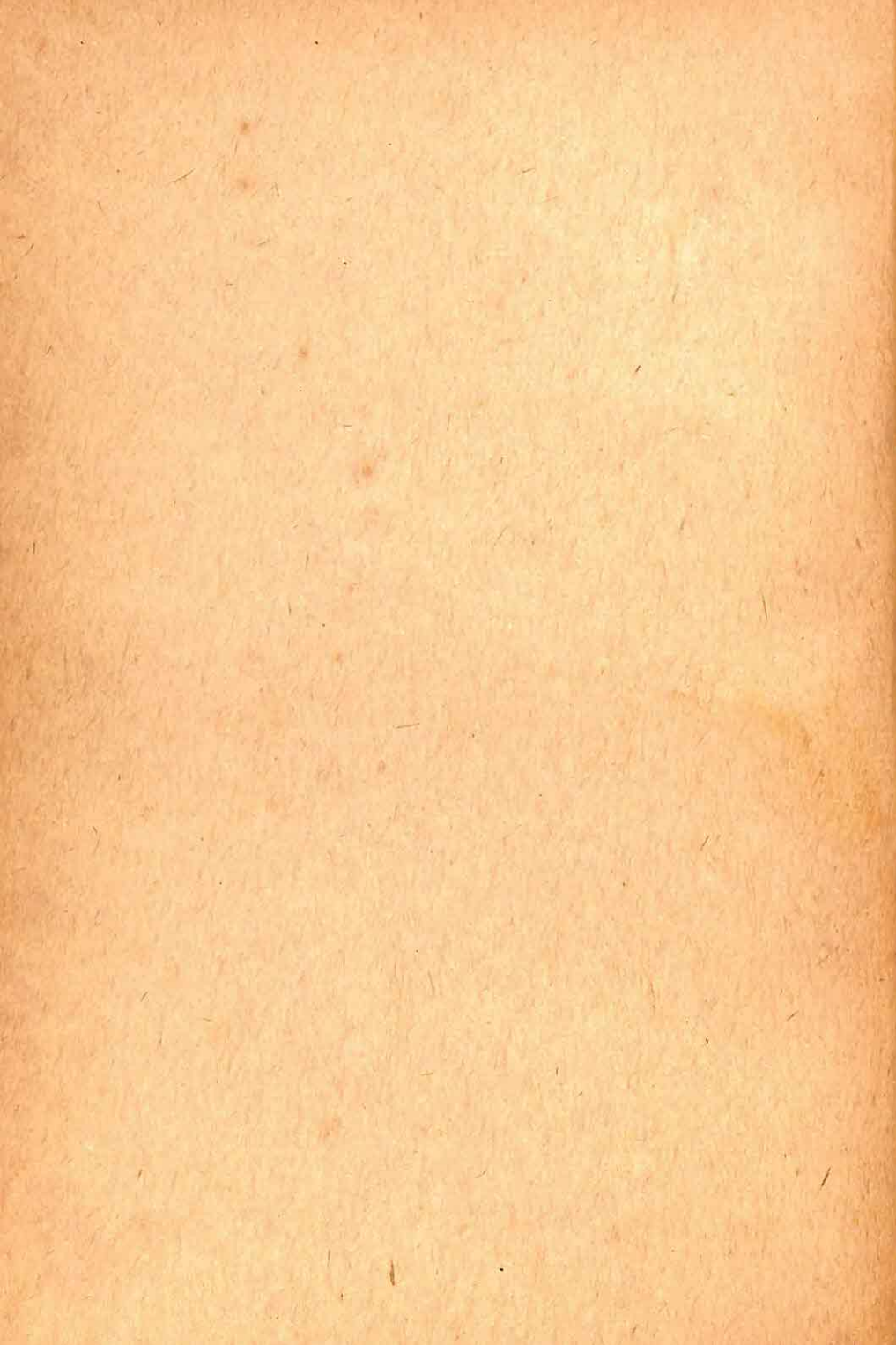
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To
The sacred memories
of my parents
Sri Durgapada Ghoshal
and Srimati Binodini Devi



PREFACE

Extracts from Preface to this work in the revised and enlarged edition (1957) of the original edition (1944) of The Beginnings of Indian Historiography and other Essays

In 1944 I brought together in a work entitled *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography and other Essays* a select list of my researches on various topics of the history and culture of India and the countries of South-East Asia influenced by her civilisation in ancient times, the selections having been made mostly from my previously published writings.¹ As this volume has now practically run out of stock, I have ventured to publish a new greatly enlarged edition with a different title, which includes a number of new chapters (Chaps. II-V, VII-VIII, XI-XII and XVII), while omitting the chapters on South-East Asia and one or two other chapters of the older work and involving a thorough revision of the rest. It has been my aim throughout to offer as complete and objective an interpretation of the relevant points as possible, to make use for this purpose of all recent publications within my range, and to subject them to the close analysis of historical research.

Because of their numbers and duration in time and the variety of their types and, last but not the least, of their characteristic qualities, the royal and dynastic chronicles of Ancient India, not to speak of the lives of the saints and the works on church-history, would seem to have deserved a systematic treatment at the hands of scholars long ago. Nevertheless it is a fact that a comprehensive and critical account of Ancient Indian historical literature has yet to be written. In the first part of the present work bearing the title *Studies in Ancient Indian Historiography* this gap has been sought to be filled in to some extent by a thorough examination of its five most important landmarks represented by the Vedic genealogical lists and compositions on legendary history as well as historical narratives properly so called, the early lives or legends of the Buddha, the historical traditions in the *Purāṇas* and the two leading royal and dynastic chronicles composed by Bāṇa and Kalhaṇa in the seventh and twelfth centuries respectively of the Christian era.

In so far as the divisions of Indian history are concerned, both Indian and foreign authors have differed widely in their opinions. A fundamental problem of Indian history, again, resulting from the periodical weakening of India's vital spirit and institutions has been sought to be tentatively solved by our thinkers in past and as well as present times. Both these points have been dealt with critically in the second part of my work to which I have given the title *Generalities*.

¹ For a complete list of these writings, vide the original edition, Preface pp. v-vii.

The subject of Ancient Indian Polity has engaged the serious attention of scholars more specially in recent years. In the third part of this work called *Studies in Ancient Indian Polity* I have discussed fully the problems arising from my predecessors' treatment of the general characteristics and tendencies of Ancient Indian States and governments, the political and constitutional significance of the Vedic ceremonies of royal and imperial consecration, the political institutions of the Vedic Aryans, the Ancient Indian republican and mixed constitutions, the status and functions of the king's ministers, and lastly, the nomenclature of the administrative offices.

There was a time, not long ago, when the historians of India could justly be charged with confining their attention to the history and chronology of her kings and dynasties. This charge is no longer applicable, since our historians are now joining to their descriptions of India's political history accounts of her social and economic conditions as well as of her religion, art and literature during the successive epochs. In thorough accord with prevailing tendencies the fourth and last part of my work entitled *Studies in Ancient Indian Social, Religious and Political History* deals in the first place with the institution of slavery during three successive culture-periods with frequent comparisons and contrasts; secondly, with a peculiarly gruesome type of religious suicide formerly prevailing among our people with concrete illustrations drawn from our literary works and works on art; thirdly, with the career and character of two historical figures responsible for a great political revolution in the eleventh century in Bengal; fourthly and lastly, with the causes of downfall of the Ancient Indian states analysed critically and comprehensively under six heads, namely the political, the military, the social, the economic and the religious as well as the literary and artistic factors.

29th June, 1957

U. N. GHOSHAL

PREFACE TO THIS EDITION

The present edition of *Studies in Indian History and Culture* is substantially a reprint of the 1957 edition which has run out of print for some time past. The chief features of this edition are, firstly, a complete revision of the text for correction of all mistakes and for incorporation of corrections printed at the beginning of the foregoing edition; secondly, splitting up the footnotes so as to ensure the utmost facility of reference to the reader and the consequent renumbering of them; thirdly, the corresponding revision of the Index; and fourthly, recasting of the *Analytical Table of Contents* and renumbering of its pages.

U. N. GHOSHAL

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VI. LITERARY AND ARTISTIC FACTORS. Criticism of statements about general decline of literature, 369; about general degradation of art and architecture, 369, 370, 371.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- A.B. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
 AĀr. Aitareya Āraṇyaka
 ALTEKAR, SGAI. State and Government in Ancient India, 2d ed., Varanasi, 1955, by A. S. Altekar
 A. N. or ANG. N. Aṅguttara Nikāya
 ĀP.ŚS. Āpastamba-Śrautasūtra
 Ā.ŚS. Āśvalāyana-Śrautasūtra
 ASIAR. (OR ASR). Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report
 ĀS.GS. Āśvalāyana-Gṛīhyasūtra
 AV. Atharvaveda
- BDS. Baudhāyana-Dharmasūtra
 BEFEO. Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient
 BGS. Baudhāyana-Gṛīhyasūtra
 BHANDARKAR, AHI. The Carmichael Lectures 1918. Lectures on the Ancient History of India on the period from 650 to 325 B.C., by D.R. Bhandarkar, Calcutta, 1919
 BHGS. Bhāradvāja-Gṛīhyasūtra
 BR. Bṛihaspati-Smṛiti
 BSOS. Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London
 BSS. Baudhāyana-Śrautasūtra
 BU. Bṛihadāraṇyaka-Upanishad
- CHI. Cambridge History of India.
 CH. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum
 CU. Chhāndogya Upanishad
 CV. Chullavagga of Vinaya Piṭaka
- DN. (OR DĪGHA N). Dīgha Nikāya
- EL. (OR EP. IND). Epigraphia Indica
- GB. Gopatha Brāhmaṇa
 GGS. Gobhila-Gṛīhyasūtra
- HGS. Hiranyakeśi-Gṛīhyasūtra
 HIR. ŚS. Hiranyakeśi-Śrautasūtra
 HOS. Harvard Oriental Series
 HP. Hindu Polity by K. P. Jayswal. Vide Jayswal HP in the next column
 HPL. A History of Hindu Public Life, Pt. I, by U. N. Ghoshal
- IA. Indian Antiquary
- IHQ. Indian Historical Quarterly
- JAOS. Journal of the American Oriental Society
 JĀT. Jātakas
 JAYASWAL, K.P. Hindu Polity, A Constitutional History of India in Hindu times (Parts I & II) by K. P. Jayswal, 3rd. edn., Bangalore 1955
 JBORS. Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society
 JNSI. Journal of the Numismatic Society of India
 JRAS. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, London.
 JUB. Jaiminiya-Upanishad-Brāhmaṇa
- KANE, HISTORY. Also abbr. as H of D. History of Dharmasāstra (Ancient and Mediaeval religious and civil laws) by MM. P.V. Kane, vols. I-IV, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona
 KĀT. Kātyāyana-Smṛiti
 KAUT. Kauṭīliya-Arthaśāstra
 KB. Kaushītaki-Brāhmaṇa
 KS. Kāthaka-Saṃhitā
 KSS. Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra
 KU. Kaushītaki-Upanishad
- LSS. Lāṭyāyana-Śrautasūtra
 LAUGĀKSHI ŚS. Laugākshi Śrautasūtra
- MAJUMDAR, AI. Ancient India by R. C. Majumdar, 2nd edn., Calcutta 1922
 MAXMÜLLER, HISTORY. A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature by F. Max Müller
 MĀN. ŚS. Mānavya-Śrautasūtra
 MBB. Mahābhārata
 MN or MAJJH. Majjhima Nikāya
 MS. Maitrāyaṇi-Saṃhitā
 MV. Mahāvagga of Vinaya Piṭaka
- NAR. Nārada-Smṛiti

PB. Pañchaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa
PGS. Pāraskara-Gṛīhyasūtra

RV. Rīgveda-Saṃhitā

SN. OR SAM. N. Saṃyutta Nikāya

ŚĀN.ĀR. Śāṅkhāyana-Āraṇyaka

Ś.ŚS. Śāṅkhāyana-Śrautasūtra

Ś.GS. Śāṅkhāyana-Gṛīhyasūtra

SATYĀSHĀḌA.ŚS. Satyāshāḍa-Śra-
utasūtra

ŚB. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa

SBE. Sacred Books of the East Series

T.ĀR. Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka

TB. Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa

TS. Taittirīya-Saṃhitā

VĀDHULA ŚS. Vādhula-Śrautasūtra

VAITĀNA S. Vaitāna-Sūtra

VIN. Vinaya Piṭaka

VI. Vedic Index of Names and Sub-
jects by A. A. Macdonell and A. B.
Keith, Vols. I-II, London, 1912

VŚS. Vārāha-Śrautasūtra

WINTERNITZ, HISTORY. A History
of Indian Literature by M. Winter-
nitz, translated from the original Ger-
man, Vols. I-II, Calcutta 1927. 1933

YĀJ. Yājñavalkya-Smṛiti

PART I
STUDIES IN
ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER I.

THE BEGINNINGS OF HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE VEDAS

INTRODUCTORY

The remarkable dearth of historical compositions in our ancient literary heritage has been emphasized by modern historians of Ancient Indian literature. This lacuna has been attributed by the scholars to a grave defect of the Ancient Indian genius, namely, its want of historical sense, and the authority of a great Muslim scholar of the 11th century, the illustrious Al-Beruni has been quoted in favour of this view.¹ For the purpose of rebutting this charge it will be sufficient to quote the example of the Ancient Indian inscriptions extending continuously from the reign of Aśoka in the 3rd century B.C. Among these the commemorative inscriptions, as they have been called, contain historical materials of great value for the current and immediately preceding reigns. The laudatory inscriptions in praise of kings and other great personages particularly give us valuable genealogical lists and notices of historical incidents. Further, the dedicatory inscriptions contain authentic accounts of construction of pious and charitable works, while the donative inscriptions give us equally precious details for the purposes of social and religious history. The historical notices in the inscriptions are often accompanied by accurate topographical and chronological details. The two most famous eras used in the inscriptions and current even now are the Vikrama Era of 56 B.C. and the Śaka Era of 78 A.D. It is not too much to say that the remarkable reconstruction of the history of Ancient India in our own times has become possible chiefly through utilisation of the valuable material contained in the inscriptions (as well as the coins and works of art) belonging to that period. To turn to another point, it is our view that the alleged paucity of historical works in our ancient literature is likewise an exaggeration. In the present section it will be our endeavour to trace the development of the leading types of Indian historical compositions

¹ Cf. the statement of Alberuni (*Al-Beruni's India* by Edward C. Sachau, pp. 10-11) quoted with approval by Sir M. A. Stein in his tr. of Kalhana's *Rājataranginī* (Vol. I Introduction, pp. 29-30). For refs. see Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 144, Winternitz, *Geschichte der Indischen Litteratur*, Vol. III, p. 80. These

scholars, while rejecting the plea of lack of historical sense among the ancient Indians, discuss the extent as well as causes of paucity of historical works in their literature (Keith. op. cit. pp. 144-47, Winternitz. op. cit. pp. 81-84). The point is further discussed by Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism & Buddhism* Vol. I pp. 15-16.

from the beginning of the Vedic Age down to the end of the ancient period.

In the oldest period of our history, namely, the Vedic—if we leave out of account the pre-historic Harappan civilization—we can distinguish three types of composition which may be regarded as indicating the first systematic attempts of our people to record historical facts. These are firstly the *vaṁśas* (succession-lists of Vedic teachers and their pupils), and the lists of *gotras* and *pravaras* which may freely be translated as family genealogies; secondly, the *gāthās* and the *nārāsaṁśīs*, which have been translated by Prof. M. Winternitz as 'epic song-verses' and as 'songs in praise of heroes' respectively; and thirdly, the records of contemporary historical incidents. These are all embedded in different works of our extensive Vedic literature commencing from the *Atharvaveda Samhitā* and ending in the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upanishads*.

A. The *vaṁśas* and *gotra-pravara* lists of Vedic literature

I. The *vaṁśa* lists.

The compilation of succession-lists of Vedic teachers appears to have begun in the period of the *Brāhmaṇas* and was continued down to the times of the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upanishads*. We give below an enumeration of these lists in chronological order. The first list which is preserved in the *Vaṁśa Brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāmaveda* school consists of not less than sixty teachers beginning with Vaiśrava and traced back to its last human teacher Kaśyapa to the gods Agni, Indra, Vāyu, Mṛityu, Prajāpati and Brahman (the Self-existent one). The second and the third lists are found in the *Jaiminiya Upanishad Brāhmaṇa* likewise belonging to the *Sāmaveda* school. Of these one contains fifty names beginning with Brahman and ending with Vaipaśchita Dārdhajayanti Gupta Lauhiteya, while the other consists only of fourteen names beginning with Indra and ending with Sudatta Pārāśarya. The fourth and the fifth lists are found in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* forming the concluding portion of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* of the White Yajurveda school. The lists which contain fifty-eight and sixty names respectively agree with each other in the ascending line up to a teacher called Sāñjivīputra, beyond whom they diverge into two different lines. This has been plausibly accounted for by the argument that Sāñjivīputra united two lines of teachers, one of which is traced back through Vāch (the goddess of speech) and Ambhīnī (the voice of thunder) to Āditya (the Sun), while the other is carried back through Prajāpati to Brahman. The current method of tracing the descent through females is illustrated by the fact that the first thirty-six teachers in these two lists have all names ending in metronymics. The seventh list which is found at the end of the late *Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka* of the R̥gvedic school contains only eighteen names beginning with Guṇākhyā Śāṅkhāyana and ending

with Brahman, the self-existent one. The eighth and the last list which is found in the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* of the *Atharvaveda* school mentions seven teachers beginning with Brahman and ending with Śaunaka styled as Mahāśāla or the great house-holder.²

We have seen above how the creation of the *vaṁśa* lists can be traced back to the late *Brāhmaṇa* works of the *Sāmaveda* and *Yajurveda* schools. By contrast the *Brāhmaṇas* of the *Rigvedic* school (*Aitareya* and *Kaushītaki*) as well as the *Brāhmaṇa* of the *Atharvaveda* school (*Gopatha*) are wanting in such lists. It is only in the late *Brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāmaveda* and the later portions of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* that the oldest *Vaṁśa* lists have been found. Probably the growing scepticism about Vedic sacrificial ritual, of which we have indications in the *Brāhmaṇas* themselves and which was to culminate in the revolt of Buddhism and Jainism, led the priestly authors of the late *Brāhmaṇa* texts to justify themselves with the weight of formidable authority going back to the gods.³

Succession-lists of teachers similar to the above but commingled with lists of deities and sages are given in the *Gṛihyasūtras*, those manuals of the Vedic domestic ritual. In this case the ritual consists in the performance of the *tarpaṇa* rite (the rite for satiating a list of deities, sages and Manes with offerings of water) which is incumbent upon the householder as part and parcel of his daily duties. Thus the *Āśvalāyana Gṛihyasūtra* beginning in this context with a list of 31 deities and sages follows it up with another list of sages, who have been identified with the seers (*rishis*) of different *Rigvedic* hymns and with teachers well-known to the *Brāhmaṇas* and related works as well as other sages who

² Vedic lists of *vaṁśas*:— (a) *Vaṁśa Brāhmaṇa* (complete list of 60 names in H. Zimmer, *Studien zur Geschichte der Gotras*, pp. 31-32; list of 59 names omitting the last name Vaiśrava in Max Müller, *History*, pp. 233-34 and Weber, *Indische Studien*, IV, p. 371f); (b) *JUB*. III 40-42 and IV 16-17 (lists of 50 and 14 names); (c) *BU*. II 6 and IV 6 (lists of 58 and 60 names after Kāṇva recension in Max Müller, tr. of the *Upanishads*, Part II pp. 118-20, 180-88); (d) *BU*. VI 5 (lists of 52 and 48 names as above in Max Müller, *op. cit.* pp. 225-27); (e) *Śan. Ār.* (list of 18 names in A. B. Keith, *Ait. Ār.*, App. pp. 327-28); (f) *Muṇḍaka Up.* (list of 7 names in *SBE*. Vol. XV, pp. 27-28). The two lists in *BU*. II 6 and IV 6 are compared by Max Müller, *op. cit.* pp. 186-87n. Max Müller similarly compares (*op. cit.* pp. 118-20n and 224n) the two lists in *BU*. II 6 and IV 6 as well as the first list in *BU*. VI 5 after the parallel versions in the *Kāṇva* and the *Mādhyaṇḍina* recensions. [The second list in *ibid* VI 5 is wanting in the *Mādh-*

yandina text, but a very similar one is found in *SB*. X 6.5.9.] For explanation of agreement and divergence between the two lists in *BU*. VI 5 vide Max Müller, *History*, pp. 229-30. As a sample of *vaṁśa* lists we quote below the shorter list in *JUB* (*JAOS*. XVI pp. 214-15):—"Verily thus Indra told this *udgītha* of the *Gāyatrāśāman*, the *Upaniṣad*, the immortal, to *Agastya*, *Agastya* to *Īṣa* *Śyāvāśvi*, *Īṣa* *Śyāvāśvi* to *Gauṣṭki*, *Gauṣṭki* to *Jvālāyana*, *Jvālāyana* to *Śātyāyani*, *Śātyāyani* to *Rāma* *Krātujāteya* *Vaiyāghrapadya*, *Rāma* *Krātujāteya* *Vaiyāghrapadya* to *Śaṅkha* *Bābhavya*, *Śaṅkha* *Bābhavya* to *Dakṣa* *Kātyāyani* *Atreya*, *Dakṣa* *Kātyāyani* *Atreya* to *Kaṁsa* *Vārakya*, *Kaṁsa* *Vārakya* to *Suyajña* *Śaṇḍilya*, *Suyajña* *Śaṇḍilya* to *Jayanta* *Vārakya*, *Jayanta* *Vārakya* to *Janaśruta* *Vārakya*, *Janaśruta* *Vārakya* to *Sudatta* *Pārāśarya*."

³ On the disintegration of the Vedic religion in the *Brāhmaṇa* period, vide Keith, *Rigveda-Brāhmaṇas*, pp. 25-26.

are mentioned as authors of works of late aphoristic and commentatorial types. Similar lists are found in other *Grīhyasūtras* as well as in *Baudhāyana-Dharmasūtra*.⁴

A great gulf separates these late lists from the *vaṁśas* of the *Brāhmaṇa* texts. In the older lists the human teachers were evidently regarded as historical personages whose names and order of succession it was necessary to record correctly as proof of genuineness of their teaching. In the later accounts the teachers have risen to the rank of semi-divine personages to be venerated along with groups of deities and manes. It was therefore no longer necessary, as the above examples testify, to transmit the names in genealogical succession. The lists in fact consist of a jumble of ancient as well as modern teachers from the remote times of the *Rig Veda* to the late period of the *sūtras*. It is characteristic of the looseness of these later accounts that even the teachers' names are needlessly duplicated.⁵

Leaving out of account the corrupt *vaṁśa* lists of the *Grīhyasūtras*, we may pause here to estimate the historical value of the genuine lists in the *Brāhmaṇas* and other works analysed above. It must be admitted at the outset that the highest links in the chain consist of names of deities like Agni, Vāyu, Indra, and last but not the least, Brahman. But the remaining and by far the considerable portions of these lists consist of human teachers. On general as well as particular grounds the names and succession of human teachers may be broadly accepted as a historical fact. It is now generally admitted that the period of the *Brāhmaṇas* from the very nature of their subject-matter and the range as well as variety of their literature must have extended over many centuries. To this must be added the fact that many of the names of teachers in the main portions of the lists are actually quoted as authorities in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and similar works. What is more, some of these personages are evidently singled out as taking an outstanding share in the development of the doctrine. Without therefore going so far as to say with Max Müller that "with the exception of the highest links in each chain of teachers the lists have an appearance of authenticity rarely to be met with in Indian compositions", we may state that they certainly reach a high degree of historical probability. The value of these lists to the modern historian of Vedic India, however, is discounted by the fact that for reasons to be explained at the beginning of the next chapter they failed to approach even at a distance the level of a biography of the human teachers. The modern historian, again, has not found it possible

⁴ Lists of deities, sages and manes in *Grīhya-sūtras*:—(a) *ĀśGS.* III 4.1-5 (summary in Kane, *History* II, pp. 690-91); (b) *SānGS.* IV 9-10 (tr. *SBE.* Vol. XXIX pp. 121-23); (c) *Sāmbavya GS* (quoted Weber, *Indische Studien*, XV 153-54); (d) *Hiranyakeśi-GS* II 19-20; (e) *BGS.* III 9; (f) *BhGS.* III 9-11; (g)

BDS. II 5. On the discrepancies between these authorities vide Kane, *History* II, pp. 692-93.

⁵ Cf. the duplications Kaushītaki and Mahākaushītaki, Paiṅgya and Mahāpaiṅgya, Aitareya and Mahaitareya, Audavāhi and Mahaudavāhi in the *ĀśGS.* list above referred to.

to fit in the long lists of the *vaṁśas* into the Vedic chronological scheme.⁶

II. The *gotra* and *pravara* lists.

The terms *gotra* and *pravara* may roughly be translated as 'family' or 'lineage' and as 'the illustrious ancestors who have contributed to the credit of the same'. In its technical sense *gotra* occurs already in an *Atharvaveda* text, where it clearly means a group of blood relations, while *Rigvedic* texts refer to *ārsheyas* (meaning *pravaras*) as well as *pravara* sages. Nevertheless, it is only in the latest *Śrautasūtras* (those manuals of the Vedic *Śrauta* sacrifices) that we find the first systematic lists of *gotras* and *pravaras*.⁷

The *gotras* and *pravaras* were intimately connected with the social and religious system of the Vedic Aryans from an early period. To take a few examples, marriage was forbidden not only within the same *gotra* but also within the same *pravara*. As regards inheritance, property

⁶ On the duration of the Brāhmaṇa period, vide Winternitz, *History*, Vol. I, pp. 194-95. Examples of teachers cited as authorities (refs. in Zimmer, *op. cit.* p. 29n):—(a) Yājñavalkya quoted 18 times and Aruṇi 9 times in *SB.*; (b) Śātyāyani quoted 7 times and Baka Dālbhya and Brahmadatta Chāikitāneya quoted twice each in *JUB.*; (c) Kaushītaki quoted 14 times and Paiṅgya 9 times in *KB.*; (d) Yājñavalkya twice quoted in *SB.* as the last and the most conclusive of triad of authorities, while Kaushītaki follows Paiṅgya several times in *KB.* in the order of authorities cited. Vide also Keith, *Rgveda-Brāhmaṇas*, p. 24n for ref. The quotation is from Max Müller, *History*, p. 229. It deserves to be mentioned that the Vedic *Vaṁśa* lists have been partly utilised by recent scholars like Drs. S. N. Pradhan and H. C. Raychaudhuri in their attempts to fix up the royal genealogies of the late Vedic period.

⁷ Refs.:—(a) *Rv.* IX 97.51; VIII 102.4; I 45.3 (*ārsheya* and *pravara* sages); (b) *Av.* V 21.3 (*gotra* in technical sense). The connexion between *gotra* and *pravara* is thus explained by Kane (*History*, Vol. II p. 497):—"Gotra is the latest ancestor or one of the latest ancestors of a person by whose name his family has been known for generations, while *pravara* is constituted by the sage or sages who lived in the remotest past, who were most illustrious and who are generally the ancestors of the *gotra* sages or in some cases the remotest ancestor alone." Lists of *gotras* and *pravaras*:—(a) *AśSS.* Part II, VI 10-15;

(b) *BSS.* Bib. Ind. ed. Vol III pp. 415-67; (c) *ApSS.* XXIV 5-10; (d) *KSS.* and *Laugākshi-SS.* (quoted in Zimmer *op. cit.* p. 6); (e) *Satyāshādhā-Hiranyakeśi-SS.*, same as *ApSS.* list above quoted with a few changes (cited by Kane, *History*, II p. 483). Parallel lists of *Rishi* genealogies in *ApSS.* and *BSS.* are given by Caland in his German tr. of *ApSS.* Vol. III pp. 409-11. As a sample of these lists we quote below (after Kane, *History*, II p. 490) the *gotra* and *pravara* divisions of two renowned *rishi* families, the Bhr̥igus and the Āṅgirasas:—"The Bhr̥igus are of two sorts, Jāmādagnya and non-Jāmādagnya. The Jāmādagnya Bhr̥igus are again twofold, Vatsas and Bidas (or Vidas), the non-Jāmādagnya Bhr̥igus are fivefold, namely, Ār̥stisenas, Yāskas, Mitrāyus, Vainyas and Śunakas. Under each of these subdivisions there are many *gotras*, on the names and numbers of which the Sūtrakāras are not agreed.... These divisions of Bhr̥igus are given here according to Baudhāyana. Āpastamba has only six of them, as he excludes Bidas from this group. According to Kātyāyana, Bhr̥igus have twelve subdivisions. The Āngirogaṇa has three divisions, Gautamas, Bharadvājas and Kevalāṅgirasas, out of whom Gautamas have seven subdivisions. Bharadvājas have four and Kevala-Āṅgirasas have six subdivisions, and each of these again is subdivided into numerous *gotras*. This is according to Baudhāyana. Other sūtrakāras differ as to the subdivisions...."

of a person dying without issue was vested in his near *sagotras*. Consecration of the domestic fire was preceded by invocation of one's *gotra* and *pravara* ancestors. In the ceremonies of tonsure and investiture with the sacred thread, there were minute differences of detail according to different *gotras* and *pravaras* of the boy's family. It might therefore be thought that the genuineness of these lists was beyond question. Unfortunately the *Śrautasūtras*, which are our primary sources, contradict themselves not only as regards numbers of *gotras*, but also the names, numbers and order of succession within the same *gotra*. From this it appears that there was no unanimity even as regards the number of the original *gotras*. When Zimmer says with regard to these lists, "dass sie sich widersprechen oder denselben Namen in mehreren Gruppen bieten, kommt nur vereinzelt vor," we must accept his view with great modifications. Even Purushottama, author of the *Pravara-mañiari* which is the leading authority on the subject in later times, is quite emphatic about the discrepancies. It would seem that a very long interval separated the beginnings of the *gotra* and *pravara* divisions from their systematic arrangement in the *Śrautasūtras*. Whatever that may be, we may safely conclude that these old genealogical lists have a substratum of historical reality.⁸

Along with the lists of Vedic teachers and family genealogies mentioned above the works of the Vedic literature occasionally give us compilations of the names of great kings who were undoubtedly historical figures. Very characteristic is the fact that the list of such kings consists of royal performers of two great ceremonies of royal and imperial consecration, namely the *Aśvamedha* (or the horse-sacrifice) and the *Aindramahā-bhisheka* or Great consecration of Indra, but we have otherwise little or no information about these kings.⁹

B. *Gāthās* and *Nārāsaṁśīs*, *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* of Vedic Literature

I. *Gāthās* and *Nārāsaṁśīs*.

However authentic the genealogies of the Vedic religious teachers and the Vedic lists of *gotras* and *pravaras* might be, they would form at best a skeleton of historical compositions properly so called. A more definite approach to history is marked by the class of compositions

⁸ The connexion of *gotras* and *pravaras* with social and religious institutions of the Vedic Aryans is explained with full references in Max Müller, *History*, pp. 203-04, and Kane, *History*, II pp. 481-83, 491. Some striking examples of contradictions in the *Śrauta-Sūtra* lists are given by the last-named author, *History*, II pp. 489-90, 495. In *History* II, App. pp. 1263-66 Kane, after giving from *BSS* a classified list of 49 *pravara* groups

as well as the *gotras* among which they are distributed, further notices its striking divergences with parallel lists in *Āś-ŚS.*, *Āp-ŚS* and *Satyāshādhā-ŚS*. The quotation is from Zimmer, *Studien*,....pp. 6-7. For Purushottama's view vide Kane, *History* II pp. 483.

⁹ After Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature* (Eng. tr. of the original German work) Vol I. p 226.

to which we now turn. These are the *gāthās* and the *nārāśaṁśīs*, which we have rendered above as 'epic song verses' and as 'songs in praise of heroes' respectively. As distinct types of composition *gāthās* and *nārāśaṁśīs* are mentioned already in a passage of the late tenth book of the *Rigveda* (ibid 85.6), although elsewhere *gāthā* is used in the more general sense of song. In an enumeration of the *Atharvaveda* (XV, 6.3-4) *gāthās* and *nārāśaṁśīs* are listed as the last and evidently the least important of the literary types known at that time.¹⁰

The *gāthās* and the *nārāśaṁśīs* are not only traceable to the period of the *Rigveda* and the *Atharvaveda*, but they also appear to be closely related to certain forms of literary composition known to these works. Such are, in the first place, the *Rigveda* hymns containing *dānastutis* ('Praises of Gifts' by the composers to royal donors). Such again are the so-called *Kuntāpa* hymns of the *Atharvaveda* of which we give below a specimen.

'Listen ye to the high praise of the king who rules over all peoples, the god who is above mortals, of Vaiśvānara Parikshit.' 'Parikshit has procured for us a secure dwelling, when he, the most excellent one, went to his seat.' (Thus) the husband in Kuru-land, when he founds his household, converses with his wife. What may I bring to thee, curds, stirred milk, or liquor? Thus the wife asks her husband in the kingdom of king Parikshit. Like light the ripe barley runs over beyond the mouth (of the vessels). The people thrive merrily in the kingdom of King Parikshit.'¹¹

We can best understand the characteristics of the Vedic *gāthās* and the *nārāśaṁśīs*, by considering the part assigned to their recitation in the *Yajus Samhitā* and the *Brāhmaṇa* works at the great ceremonies of the *Āśvamedha* (defined above) and the *Purushamedha* (symbolical sacrifice of human victims). To begin with the *Āśvamedha*, we read how on the day of letting loose of the sacrificial horse, the *vināganagins* (musicians who sang to the accompaniment of all sorts of lutes) are required to sing praises of the sacrificer along with those of just kings of ancient times. This was repeated daily during the whole year of the horse's wandering and was continued in the same way down to the day

¹⁰ The *Av.* text is as follows:—*Richah, sāmāni, yajūṁshī, brahman, itihāsaḥ, purāṇam, gāthāḥ nārāśaṁsyah.* In *SB.* XI 5.6. 4-8, *T. Ār.* II 10, *Ās-Gs.* III 3 the various classes of texts are said to constitute as many forms of offerings to the gods, and their recitation is said to satiate not only the gods, but also the Fathers.

¹¹ On the *Rv.* hymns of the type above mentioned, Winternitz (*A. History of Indian Literature* Vol. I., p. 114) justly remarks as follows:—"Some of them are songs of victory, in which the god

Indra is praised, because he has helped some king to achieve a victory over his enemies. With the praise of the god is united the glorification of the victorious king. Finally, however, the singer praises his patron, who has presented him with oxen, horses and beautiful slaves out of the booty of war.... Others are very long sacrificial songs, also mostly addressed to Indra, and they also are followed by verses in which the patron of the sacrifice is praised, because he gave the singer a liberal priestly fee."

of the sacrificer's initiation (*dīkshā*). Afterwards the musicians have to sing daily, as before, praises of the sacrificer along with those of the gods. Towards the conclusion of the ceremony the musicians have to sing praises of the sacrificer along with those of Prajāpati. We are again told how on the day of letting loose of the horse a Brāhmaṇa *vināgāthīn* (lute-player) has to sing to the accompaniment of the *uttaramandrā* (a kind of lute, according to the commentator) three stanzas composed by himself on such topics as 'he performed such and such sacrifice', 'he gave such and such gifts'. On the same day a Brāhmaṇa lute-player sings three *gāthās* similarly composed by himself and relating to the sacrifices and gifts of the sacrificer, while a Kshatriya lute-player does the same on topics relating to the battles fought and the victories won by the sacrificer. This has to be repeated each day during the whole year.¹²

We may next quote a few *gāthās* given by the Vedic authorities as illustrations in the parallel lists of royal performers of the *Aśvamedha* and the *Aindramahābhisheka* referred to above. The *gāthās*, in their English translations in prose and verse, are as follows:

At Āsandīvant, a horse grass-eating,
Adorned with gold and yellow garland,
Of dappled hue, was bound,
By Janamejaya for the gods.

(*Gāthā* of king Janamejaya Pārikshita).

The Maruts as attendants
Dwelt in the house of Marutta,
Of Āvikshita Kāmapri
The All-gods were the assessors.

(*Gāthā* of King Marutta Āvikshita).

At Parivakrā, the Pañcāla overlord of the Krivis seized a horse meant for sacrifice, with offering gifts of a hundred thousand (head of cattle). A thousand myriads there were, and five-and-twenty hundred, which the Brāhmaṇas of the Pañcālas from every quarter divided between them.

(*Gāthā* of Kraivya, the Pañchāla King).

Covered with gold trappings,
Beasts black with white tusks,
At Maṣṇāra Bharata gave,
A hundred and seven myriads,

.....
.....

¹² The quotation about *dānastutis* is from Winternitz, *History*, I p. 114. The tr.

of the *Av.* extract is after Bloomfield *SBE*. XLII pp. 197-98).

The great deed of Bharata
Neither men before or after,
As the sky a man with his hands
The five peoples have not attained.

(*Gāthā* of Bharata, son of Duṣhanta)¹³.

We now turn to the *Purushamedha* sacrifice. The *Sāṅkhāyana Śrauta-sūtra* in the course of its description of this sacrifice mentions (XVI II) a series of ten *nārāśamśis*, which are to be sung in regular cycles of ten days' duration. We give below a summary of these *nārāśamśis* according to the short description of the original texts:—

1. How Śunaḥśepa, son of Ajigarta, was released from the sacrificial yoke,
2. How Kakshivant, descendant of Uśij, gained a gift from his patron,
3. How Śyāvāśva gained a gift from his patron,
4. How Bharadvāja gained gifts from his two patrons,
5. How Vasishṭha became the Purohita of Sudās,
6. How Aśaṅga Plāyogi, being a woman, became a man,
7. How Vatsa, descendant of Kaṇva, obtained a gift from his patron,
8. How Vaśa, son of Aśva, gained a gift from his patron,
9. How Praskaṇva obtained gift from his patron,
10. How Nābhānedishṭha, descendant of Manu, obtained a gift from Aṅgiras.

We may quote here a smaller group of texts illustrating the use of *gāthās* and *nārāśamśis* by the Vedic authorities for the purpose of the domestic ritual. These authorities, in the first place, enjoin in solemn and moving words the daily study of *gāthās* and *nārāśamśis* (or *nārāśamśi-gāthās*) as well as of other texts upon the householder. In the next place, we are told that at the *simantonayana* ceremony or parting of the hair performed on the expectant mother in the fourth, sixth, seventh or eighth month of her pregnancy, the husband has to ask two lute-players (*vinā-gāthins*) to sing about the king or anybody else who is still more valiant or about king Soma.¹⁴

In the above account of the ritual recitations of *gāthās*, we have a clue to the methods of their composition and preservation. At the *Aśvamedha* ceremony, as we have seen, the *gāthās* were required to be sung by *vināgaṇagins*, while a Brāhmaṇa as well as a *vināgāthin* has to

¹³ Refs. to recitations of *gāthās* at *Aśvamedha*:—P. E. Dumont, *L' Aśvamedha*, pp. 40, 56, 68 (song by musicians on day of letting loose the sacrificial horse and on following days); pp. III, 126, 130 (song by musicians towards conclusion of the sacrifice); pp. 32, 41-43, 304, 306 (song by Brāhmaṇa and Kshatriya lute-players). In the work above mentioned the author gives with full references a very valuable and detailed

account of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice according to the ritual of the *Yajur-veda*, while in an Appendix he describes the Black Yajus ritual after the authoritative texts (*ApSS.* XX 1-23, *BSS.* XV 1.30 and some fragments of *VādhuḥSS.*).

¹⁴ Songs by lute-players at *simantonayana* ceremony:—(a) *SāṅSS.* I 22. 11-12; (b) *RGS.* I 15.7-8; (c) *ĀsGS.* I 14.6-7.

sing songs composed by himself. In the ritual relating to the *śīman-tonnayana* ceremony similarly, the songs were sung by *vināgāthins* employed by the householder. It, therefore, follows that there existed already at this early period a class of minstrels who not only preserved and handed down, but also, composed songs in honour of human celebrities. This class, however, did not as yet form a closed caste or corporation, for individual Brāhmaṇa and Kshatriya musicians could play the same role. Whether a professional class of bards or minstrels existed in the Vedic period is uncertain. In the list of symbolical victims at the *Purushamedha* occurring in the *Vājasaneyī-Saṁhitā* (XIII) and the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (III 4), it is true, we find the *māgadha* and the *sūta* as well as the lute-player and the flute-player. In the Epics and the *Purāṇas* the *māgadha* and the *sūta* are well-known designations of eulogists or panegyrists as well as genealogists of kings. But their connotation in the Vedic literature is uncertain.¹⁵

In the extracts quoted above reference is made to several types of Vedic *gāthās*. The first group of texts, as we have seen, mentions praise-songs of the sacrificer and of kings of ancient times as well as of Prajāpati, the chief deity of the Brāhmaṇa pantheon. The third group of texts mentions songs about the reigning king, or anybody else who is still more valiant, or about king Soma. We are here concerned with *gāthās* in praise of kings. In the first extract, as we have observed, the topics of the *gāthās* of kings are said to comprise sacrifices and gifts as well as his wars and victories. The former class of *gāthās* is illustrated with quotations in the second extract about king Janamejaya Pārikshita, Kraivya (the Pañchāla king) and Bharata (king of the Purus).¹⁶ Of the class of *gāthās* in honour of the gods, we have concrete examples in the *Indragāthās* or songs in honour of Indra in *Atharvaveda* (XX, 128.12-16) and the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (VI.32). But it is unnecessary to speak of them in the present work.

The *gāthās* and *nārāsaṁsis* occupy an important place in the development of Indian historical literature. Apart from the *gāthās* to the gods, they may be proved by references in the Vedic *Saṁhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* to relate to historical characters and incidents. Thus Janamejaya Pārikshita of the Kuru line, Para Āṭṇara king of Kośala, Marutta Āvikshita king of the Pañchālas, and Bharata Dauḥshanti of the great Bharata tribe are well-known celebrities in the late *Saṁhitā*

¹⁵ *Māgadha* and *sūta* at *Purushamedha*:—VS. XIII, TB. III 4. Their function in Vedic literature is explained in VI. s.v. and in the Epics and *Purāṇas* by Pargiter in *The Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, pp. 16-18.

¹⁶ Refs. to *gāthās* of kings:—(a) AB. VIII 21=SB. XIII 5.4.2, and with slight variations *ŚāṅśS.* XVI 9.1 (*gāthā* of Janamejaya); (b) AB. VIII 21, cf. SB. XIII 5.4.6 and *ŚāṅśS.* XVI

9.16 (°of Marutta); (c) SB. XIII 5.4.7-8 (°of Kraivya); (d) AB. VIII 23=SB. 5.4.11f (°of Bharata). A connecting link between the names in SB. and *ŚāṅśS.*, on the one hand and those in AB. on the other, is furnished by the fact that the last-named work mentions most of the kings performing the Great Consecration ceremony to have like-wise celebrated the horse-sacrifice.

and *Brāhmaṇa* literature, and they no doubt belong to the same period. The references to Āsandīvant as capital of Janamejaya, to Parivākrā as capital of Kraivya Pañchāla and to Nāḍapit as the birth-place of Bharata have every appearance of historical reality. To the human authorship of the *gāthās*, as distinguished from the supposed revealed character of the Vedic hymns, pointed testimony is borne by a text of *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. Granting all these points the question still remains, 'What is the historical value of the *gāthās* and *nārāsaṃsīs* of Vedic literature'? We have first to admit that these works, no doubt because of their courtly exaggerations, drew upon themselves the reprobation of some of the Vedic schools. Thus the *Kāṭhaka Samhitā*, the *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā* and the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, all belonging to the Black *Yajurveda*, have a series of more or less parallel texts branding the *gāthās* and *nārāsaṃsīs* as lies and as the filth of Brahman (the Vedas), and placing acceptance of gifts from their reciters on the same moral level as that from a drunkard. These works, however, have been authoritatively recognised to be precursors of epic poetry. With at least equal justice we may claim that they were the forerunners of the Indian historical *kāvya*, common to both being the fact that they eulogise the achievements of historical kings, naturally enough with some exaggeration.¹⁷

II *Itihāsas and Purāṇas*.

Distinctly superior in importance to the *gāthās* and *nārāsaṃsīs* in the eyes of the Vedic Aryans, though not from the standpoint of Indian historiography, are the classes of compositions known to the Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* under the name of *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa*. We may freely translate them as 'legends of gods and heroes' and 'legends of origin' respectively. In the passage of the late fifteenth book of the *Atharvaveda* quoted above, they are mentioned after the sacred *Ṛik*, *Sāman*, *Yajus* and *Brahman* and before the *gāthās* and *nārāsaṃsīs*, in a series of enumerated texts. The same order is preserved in the above-quoted texts from *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI 5), *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (11, 10) and *Āśvalāyana Gṛihasūtra* (III, 3), enjoining daily study of the *Veda* upon the householder. In a number of parallel passages in the *Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad* virtually enumerating the known branches of learning at that time, *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* are similarly mentioned after *Ṛigveda* and

¹⁷ On Āsandīvant etc. vide fn. 11 above. Human authorship of *gāthās*:—AB. VIII 18 ("Om is the response to a Ṛc; 'Be it so' 'to a *gāthā*. Om is divine. 'Be it so' human"). Condemnation of *gāthās* and *nārāsaṃsīs*:—(a) KS. XIV 5 (*anṛitam hi gāthā = nṛitam nārāsaṃsīmattasya na pratigrihyam = anṛitam hi mattaḥ*); (b) TB. I 32.6-7 (*yadbrahma-*

naḥ śamalam = āsit sa gāthānārāsaṃsy = abhavat yad = annasya sū surātasmād = gāyātāścha mattasya cha na pratigrihyam); (c) MS. I 11.5. *Gāthās* and *nārāsaṃsīs* as precursors of epic poetry: Weber, *Episches im Vedischen Ritual*, p. 4 followed by Winternitz, *History*, Vol. I p. 314.

Yajurveda, *Sāmaveda* and *Atharvāṅgīrasa*, but before a number of subsidiary studies. In a similar series of parallel passages in the *Chhāndogya Upanishad Itihāsa-Purāṇa* is mentioned as the fifth after the *Rigveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāma-veda* and the *Ātharvaṇa*, but before a number of secondary branches of learning.¹⁸

The elaborate account of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and other works shows that not only were *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* dignified with the title of 'Veda', but that their recitation formed an important element of the complex sacrificial ritual. On the day of loosening of the sacrificial horse, the *hotṛi* priest recites to the crowned king surrounded by his sons and ministers what are called the 'revolving' (or 'recurring') legends (*pāriplava ākhyāna*). These are so called because the priest recites on ten successive days as many different *Vedas*, and this goes on for a year in cycles of ten days each. In the order of this narration *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* are reserved for the eighth and ninth days, while *Rik*, *Yajus*, *Atharvan*, *Āṅgīrasa*, *sarpa-vidyā* ('the science of snakes'), *devajana-vidyā* (knowledge of divine beings), *māyā* (magic) are mentioned for the first seven days, and *Sāman* for the tenth.

The recital of the *pāriplava* legends is evidently intended to show the models to whom the sacrificer is assimilated. Equally didactic is the use of *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* in certain domestic sacrifices described in the *Grihyasūtras*. According to *Āśvalāyana Grihyasūtra* when a misfortune like the death of a preceptor takes place, the members of the family should cast out the old domestic fire and kindle a new one. Keeping that fire burning, they sit till the silence of the night narrating the stories of famous men and discoursing on the auspicious *Itihāsa-purāṇas*. Again, according to *Gobhila Grihyasūtra* on the occasion of the ceremonies on the new and full-moon days, the husband and the wife should spend the night so as to alternate their sleep with waking, entertaining themselves with *Itihāsa* or with other discourse.¹⁹

While the ritual and didactic import of *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* in these ancient times is sufficiently demonstrated by the texts, the same cannot be said of their character as historical compositions. In the explanatory (*arthavāda*) portions of the *Brāhmaṇas* as distinguished from those enjoining the precepts (*vidhi*), there have been preserved specimens of the old *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa*. Here we have, as examples of *Itihāsas* the legend of Purūravas and Urvaśī already known in the *Rigveda*, the legend of the Flood, the legend of Śunaḥśepa and so forth. As

¹⁸ Order of enumeration of branches of learning:—*AB.* XV, *ŚB.* XI 5, *Tār.* II 10, *ĀśGS.* III 3, *BU.* II 4.10; IV 1.2; IV 5.11; *CU.* III 4. 1-4; VII 1.2; 2.1; 7.1.

¹⁹ Recitation of 'revolving legend' at *Aśvamedha*:—*ŚB.* XIII 4.3.2f, *ĀśSS.* X 7.1f; *ŚānSS.* XVI 2.1.f. Recitation of *itihāsa* and *purāṇa* in a misfortune: *ĀśGS.* IV 6.6. Recitation of same on

new and full-moon days:—*GGS.* I 6.6. The slight differences between the first set of texts are noticed by Sieg, *Die Sagenstoffe des Rgveda*, p. 21n. Dumont (*L'Aśvamedha*, p. 39) aptly describes the *pāriplava ākhyānas* as "les anciens récits épiques, qui montrent les modèles du roi dans la légende, modèles auxquels on assimile le sacrifice".

examples of *Purāṇas*, we have the legend of origin of the four castes out of the body of Prajāpati and the various creation-legends. A reference in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* shows that wars between gods and Asuras also formed the materials of the ancient *Itihāsa*. On the other hand, we have as yet no trace of genealogies of kings and dynasties with chronological references such as were to constitute an essential ingredient of the later *Purāṇas* according to the standard definition.²⁰

In the Vedic lists of *gotras* and *pravaras* as well as in the fragments of the *gāthās* and the *nārāsaṁsīs* (though not probably in the *Itihāsas* and the *Purāṇas*) quoted in the first two sections of this chapter have been preserved types of material relating to our most ancient historical traditions. It remains for us to deal in the present section with other types which may more properly be said to come within the category of historical compositions. Of these last it may be said that while their defects are sufficiently obvious they are of considerable interest as illustrating the extent to which the historical sense had dawned upon the Indian people in the oldest recorded period of their history.

C. Vedic historical compositions

We have now completed our survey of the groups of compositions in the Vedic literature approaching a historical character. It is now proposed to notice a third group of such compositions which may claim to be historical after the imperfect standards of the time. Of these it may be said that while their defects are sufficiently obvious they are of considerable interest as illustrating the extent to which the historical sense had dawned upon the Indian people in the oldest recorded period of their history.

The *Ṛigveda Samhitā*

We may begin our survey of the historical material in the *Rigveda Samhitā* by referring to a type of compositions which involves the blending of mythological as well as historical characters and incidents in inextricable confusion. In a hymn (*Ṛv.* I 63) addressed to Indra the poet observes in the same breath that the demons *Śushṇa* and *Vṛitra* as well as the enemies of the historical kings *Purukutsa* and *Sudās* were slain or overpowered by the God. In a second hymn (*Ṛv.* IV 30) in praise of Indra we read that the goddess *Ushas* and the *Dāsas* (aborigines) *Śambara* and *Varchin* as well as the *Āryas* *Arṇa* and *Chitraratha* were crushed by the God, that *Turvaśa* and *Yadu* were safely carried over a

²⁰ For specimens of Vedic *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*: (a) *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII s.v. *Itihāsa*

and (b) Winternitz, *History*, Vol. I p. 208f. for ref. to material of *Itihāsa*:—*SB.* XI 1.6.9.

destructive flood through His favour, and that the kings Divodāsa and Dabhiti owed the destruction of their foes to Him. In a third and a fourth Indra hymn (*Rv.* I 53 and VI 18) we are told that Tūrvayāṇa (a prince of the Pakthas according to *Rv.* X 61. If) was delivered by the God from his enemies, namely, the mythical (?) Kutsa and Āyu as well as the historical prince Atithigva.

Passing to the type of historical compositions properly so called, we may first quote a short extract (*Rv.* 42. 8-9) which seems to mean that Purukutsa son of Durgaha having been either captured or slain, his wife propitiated the seven sages who obtained for her a famous son Trasadasyu by favour of the gods Indra and Varuṇa. With this we may mention another extract (*Rv.* IX 61) which states how Divodāsa got his enemies—the Dāsa Sambara as well as the Ārya Turvaśa and Yadu—destroyed by Indra.

In the above passages it will be observed we have but the barest references to the historical incidents unrelieved by any geographical detail. That the R̥gvedic seers, however, did not lack interest in geography is proved by a number of illustrations.²¹ It is in their descriptions of military raids and battle-scenes that the historical and geographical sense of the R̥gvedic seers comes out most clearly. *Rv.* III 33 tells us in the form of a dialogue between Viśvāmitra and "the pair of mothers" Vipāś and Śutudri how the Bharatas engaged in a raid were able to cross the rivers then in high flood through the sage's prayers. The second extract (*Rv.* VI 27. 5-7) introduces us to a great victory won through Indra's favour by King Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna (identified in the context with the Śrīñjaya King Daivavāta) over the Vṛichīvans at Hariyūpiyā on the Yavyāvati river and another victory over Turvaśa. In this passage likewise the poet's reference to the numbers and equipment of the troops as well as their military tactics indicates his interest in the art of warfare. The third group of hymns (*Rv.* VII 18, VII 33 and VII 83) deals with the most famous battle of the *R̥gveda Samhitā* technically called *dāśa-rājñā*. This was the battle of the ten kings allied against the Tṛitsu king Sudās who won a glorious victory over them on the banks of the Parushnī river. In the extracts quoted below many of the references are sufficiently obscure to have formed the subject of controversy amongst scholars

²¹ Cf. (a) *Rv.* IV 30.18 (ref. to defeat of Arṇa and Chitraratha beyond the Sarayu); (b) *Rv.* VI 27.5-7 (ref. to defeat of Vṛichīvans at Hariyūpiyā on the Yavyāvati); (c) *Rv.* III 23.4 (two Bharata chiefs associated with the rivers Āpayā, Sarasvatī and Dṛishadvatī all belonging to the region of sacred Kurukshetra of later literature); (d) *Rv.* VII 96.2 (Pūrus dwelling on the two grassy banks of the sacred Sarasvatī); (e) *Rv.* II 41, VI 61, VII 95-96 (apotheosis of Sarasvatī 'the

mightiest and most divine of streams', best mother, best of rivers, best of goddesses'); (f) *Rv.* X 75, the famous Hymn to the Rivers. Of the last named hymn Max Müller (*India, What Can It Teach U?* p. 168) justly says "The poet takes in at one sweep three great armies of rivers—those flowing from the North-West into the Indus, those joining it from the North-East, and in the distance the Ganges and the Jumna with their tributaries."

in recent times. Leaving these doubtful points out of account, we can still observe how the poet gives us the geographical situation of the most famous battle in R̥gvedic times. What is more, he vividly brings before our eyes, as no other R̥gvedic seer does, the successive stages of the battle—the exultant march of the confederates, the resulting panic in Sudās's force, the sudden turn of fortune and the final rout of the allies who were either drowned in the river or forced to flee, leaving their camp to be plundered by the victors. With these passages, then the realism of the R̥gvedic seers in the description of historical scenes reaches its culminating point.²²

²² We quote below the most relevant extracts:—

- (a) "What though the floods spread widely, Indra made them shallow and easy for Sudās to traverse. He, worthy of our praise, caused the Śimyu, foe of our hymn, to curse the rivers' fury. Eager for spoil was Turvasa Puroḍas, fain to win wealth, like fishes urged by hunger. The Bhrgus and the Druhyus quickly listened: friend rescued friend mid the two distant peoples. Together came the Pakthas, the Bhalānas, the Alinas, the Śivas, the Viśānins. Yet to the Tr̥tsus came the Ārya's comrade, through love of spoil and heroes' war, to lead them. Fools, in their folly fain to waste her waters, they parted inexhaustible Paruṣṇī. Lord of the Earth, he with his might repressed them: still lay the herd and the affrighted herdsman. As to their goal they sped to their destruction: they sought Paruṣṇī; even the swift returned not. Indra abandoned to Sudās the manly, the swiftly flying foes, unmanly babblers. The king who scattered one-and-twenty people of both Vaikarna tribes through lust of glory. As the skilled priest clips grass within the chamber, so hath the hero Indra wrought their downfall. The Ānavas and Druhyus, seeking booty, have slept, the sixty hundred, yea, six thousand, and six-and-sixty heroes. For the pious were all these mighty exploits done by Indra. These Tr̥tsus under Indra's careful guidance came speeding like loosed waters rushing downward. The foemen, measuring exceeding closely, abandoned to Sudās all their provisions. Yamunā and the

Tr̥tsus aided Indra. There he stripped Bheda bare of all his treasures. The Ājas and Śigrus and the Yakṣus brought in to him as tribute heads of horses" (Rv. VII 18.5-9, 11, 14-15, 19);

- (b) "So verily, with these he crossed the river, in company with these he slaughtered Bheda. So in the fight with the Ten kings, Vasiṣṭha! did Indra help Sudās through your devotions. Like thirsty men they looked to heaven, in battle with the Ten kings, surrounded and imploring. Then Indra heard Vasiṣṭha as he praised him and gave the Tr̥tsus ample room and freedom. Like sticks and staves wherewith they drive the cattle, stripped bare, the Bharatas were found defenceless: Vasiṣṭha then became their chief and leader: then widely were the Tr̥tsus' clans extended" Rv. VII 33. 3, 5-6);
- (c) "Looking to you and your alliance, O ye Men, armed with broad axes they went forward, fain for spoil. Ye smote and slew his Dāsa and his Āryan enemies, and helped Sudās with favour, Indra-Varuṇa. The boundaries of earth were seen all dark with dust: O Indra-Varuṇa, the shout went up to heaven. The enmities of the people compassed me about. Ye heard my calling and ye came to me with help. O Indra-Varuṇa, ye gave Sudās your aid when the Ten kings in battle compassed him about, there where the white-robed Tr̥tsus with their braided hair, skilled in song, worshipped you with homage and with hymn" (Rv. VII 83. 1, 3, 8).

For discussions of the proper names of persons and places in the above extracts vide VI., s.v. *Bheda*, *Bharata* *Tr̥tsu*, *Yamunā* and specially *Paruṣṇī*.

The *Atharvaveda Samhitā*

In contrast with the *Rigveda Samhitā* the *Atharvaveda* has little corresponding to historical compositions. In *Av.* IV 29, however, we have in the fashion of the *Rv.* passages quoted above a confused list of mythical as well as historical sages and heroes who are said to have been favoured by the gods Mitra and Varuṇa. More realistic is the brief but vivid description, in the form of conversation between a husband and a wife, of the high prosperity of the Kuru-land under King Parikshit, in the last book of the *Atharvaveda*. By contrast *Av.* V 19. I anticipating a familiar type in the *Yajus-Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, gives us what purports to be a historical example of the dangers befalling the oppressors of *Brāhmaṇas*.²³

The *Yajus-Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*

The *Samhitās* of the *Yajurveda* and the *Brāhmaṇas* introduce us to a number of distinct types of historical compositions which shares in the exclusively liturgical character of these works. The first type consists of citations of authorities in respect of disputed questions of the sacrificial ritual. This may be illustrated by two examples, namely *ŚB.* I.1.1.7 (quoting the contradictory opinions of Āshādha Sāvayasa and Yājñavalkya) and *KB.* XXVI 3 (quoting those of Paiṅgya and Kaushitaki).²⁴

²³ Quotations of above extracts:—

- (a) Ye who favour Aṅgiras, who Agasti, Jamadagni, Atri. O Mitra-and-Varuṇa, who favour Kaśyapa, who Vasishṭha—do ye free us from distress. Ye who favour Śyāvāśva, Vadhryaśva Purumīdha, Atri, O Mitra-and-Varuṇa, who favour Vimada, Saptavadhrī—do ye free us from distress. Ye who favour Bharadvāja, who Gavishthira, Viśvāmitra, Kutsa, O Varuṇa (and) Mitra, who favour Kakshivant, also Kaṇva—do ye free us from distress. Ye who favour Medhātithi, who Triśoka, who Uśanas Kāvya, O Mitra-and-Varuṇa, who favour Gotama, also Mudgala—do ye free us from distress (*Av.* IV 29. 3-6); (b) 'Parikshit has produced for us a secured dwelling when he, the most excellent one, went to his seat.' (Thus) the husband in Kuru-land, when he founds his household, converses with his wife. 'What may I bring to thee, curds, stirred drink or liquor?' (Thus) the wife asks her husband in the kingdom of king Parikshit. Like light the ripe barley runs over

beyond the mouth (of the vessels). The people thrive merrily in the kingdom of king Parikshit. (*Av.* XX. 127. 7-10)

- (c) They grew excessively; they did not quite (*iva*) touch up to the sky; having injured Bhṛigu, the Sṛiṅjaya, Vaitahavyas, perished. (*Av.* V 19.1).

²⁴ Quotations from the extracts:—

- (a) "On this point Āshādha Sāvayasa, on the one hand, was of opinion that the vow consisted in fasting. Yājñavalkya, on the other hand, said, If he does not eat, he thereby becomes a sacrificer to the manes, and and if he does it, he eats before the gods have eaten: let him therefore eat what, when eaten, counts as not eaten" (*ŚB.* I.1.1.7); (b) Now Paiṅgya used to say 'Superfluous would be a *mantra* repeated twice when not prescribed; therefore he should not proceed immediately.' So Paiṅgya used to say. Now Kaushitaki used to say, 'These rites in which the number of *mantras* employed is limited have limited fruits. Those in which an unlimited number of *mantras* is employed have unlimited fruits (*KB.* XXVI 3).

The second type consists of what may be called historical examples emphasizing the authority of different branches of the sacrificial ritual. In some extracts examples are quoted to illustrate the dangers attending ritual errors. Thus in *TS.* VI 6. 2 and *KS.* XII 3 the *Sṛiñjayas* are said to have been defeated because of a mistake committed in the ritual by their priest *Devabhāga*. Other and by far the larger number of such extracts are quoted to show the advantages attending the performance of the hieratic ritual. Thus we have passages recounting or promising the various benefits (success in winning a kingdom, winning offspring, and acquiring high position) derived or to be derived by a sacrificer from compliance with the prescribed rites.²⁵ None of the examples of the type of compositions we are now considering is more famous than the more or less parallel lists of royal sacrificers who won world-wide dominion through performances of the ceremonies of 'the Great Consecration of Indra' (according to *AB.* VIII 21-23) and the *Aśvamedha* (according to *ŚB.* XIII 5.4 1f and *Śān ŚS.* XVI 9).²⁶

²⁵ Cf. the following specimens:— (a) "Now *Duṣṭaritu* *Paumsāyana* had been expelled from the kingdom which had come down to him through ten generations, and the *Sṛiñjayas* also expelled *Revottaras* *Pāṭava* *Cākra* *Sthapati*. [The priest with the king's consent performed the *Sautrāmaṇi* for the purpose of conferring upon him dominion over the *Sṛiñjayas*, but *Bal-hika* *Prātipiya*, king of the *Kurus*, hearing of this report wished to prevent the performance of the sacrifice. After he had tried in vain to place the priest on the horns of a dilemma] he went home and said 'It is not so (as we had thought): that kingdom of the *Sṛiñjayas* now belongs to *Duṣṭaritu*:— in such and such a manner has that *Cākra* *Sthapati* this day performed the sacrifice'. (*ŚB.* XII 9.3.1f); (b) "The *Jahnu* and the *Vṛcivats* quarrelled for (the possession of) the kingdom. *Viśvāmitra* the king of the *Jahnu*s saw this rite [*scill.* the four-day rite of *Viśvāmitra*] and practised it. He got the kingdom, the others [*Vṛcivats*] were deprived of it" (*PB.* XXI 12. 2-4); (c) "This fire (*Para* *Āṭṇara*, *Kakṣivant* *Auśija*, *Vitahavya* *Śrāyasa*, and *Trasadasyu* *Paurukutsya* piled, being desirous of offspring; then indeed did they win thousands each of children" (*TS.* V 6 5, cf. *KS.* XXII 3, *PB.* XXV 16.3, *JUB.* II 6.11); (d) "Now he was indeed *Dakṣa*: and because he sacrificed in the beginning with this sacrifice, it is called *Dakṣāyana* sacrifice... Now that same sacrifice was after-

wards performed by *Pratidārṣa* *Śvai-kna*; and he indeed was an authority to those who emulated him. An authority, therefore, he will become, whosoever, knowing this performs that sacrifice: let him, therefore, perform that sacrifice... That same sacrifice was afterwards performed by *Devabhāga* *Srautarṣa*. He was *purohita* both to the *Kurus* and *Sṛiñjayas*. Now a very high position (is held by him) who is *purohita* of one kingdom: how much higher, then, is the position (of one) who (is the *purohita*) of two (kingdoms). A very high position accordingly he obtains, whosoever, knowing this, performs that sacrifice: let him, therefore, perform that sacrifice" (*ŚB.* II 4. 2f); (e) "This food *Rāma* *Mārgaveya* proclaimed to *Viśvantara* *Sauṣadmana*; this also *Tura* *Kāvaṣeya* proclaimed to *Janamejaya* *Pāriṣita*; this *Parvata* and *Nārada* proclaimed to *Somaka* *Sāhadevya*... All of them attained greatness, having partaken of this food. All of them were great kings; like *Āditya*, established in prosperity, they gave heat, obtaining tribute from all the quarters" (*AB.* VII 34).

²⁶ Quotations from *AB.* VIII 21-23. — "With this great anointing of *Indra* *Tura* *Kāvaṣeya* anointed *Janamejaya* *Pāriṣita*. Therefore *Janamejaya* *Pāriṣita* went round the earth completely, conquering on every side, and offered the horse in sacrifice... With this great anointing of *Indra* *Cyavana* *Bhārgava* anointed *Śāryāta*

The third type of historical compositions that may be mentioned in this context consists of those relating to the origin of some existing ritual practices. *ŚB.* (II 4.4.) tells us in connexion with the *Dākshāyana* sacrifice that it was performed by Dakṣa Pārvaṭi. In another passage (*ŚB.* XIII 5.4.19) we read that "Śatānika Sātrājita performed the Govināta (form of Aśvamedha) after taking away the horse of the Kāśya (king); and since that time the Kāśis do not keep up the (sacrificial) fires, saying, 'The soma drink has been taken from us'".

We now come to the fourth type of historical compositions which is also the largest and the most characteristic of its kind in our present works. This consists of stories of theological disputes which are frequently set forth for greater dramatic effect in the form of imaginary dialogues between the leading actors in the scenes. In its simplest form this type partakes of the characteristics of a catechism on selected points of the sacrificial ritual. In *JUB* I 59. 1-14 we are told how Śaunaka, the *purohita* of King Abhipratārin Kākshaseni, put a series of such questions to Brahmadatta Chāikitāneya who answered them to the former's complete satisfaction. When the king proposed fresh questions, Brahmadatta somewhat abruptly cut short the conversation to the former's disappointment. *JUB* IV 6-8 similarly states how Baka Dālbya, the most learned Brāhmaṇa of the Kuru-Pāñchālas, answered a series of five questions put to him by King Bhagīratha of the Ikshvāku family. In a few other extracts the disputes turn on points of descent or good conduct. This gives the priestly author the opportunity to introduce dramatic incidents and studies of individual characters along with glimpses of contemporary manners. In *AB.* (II 19) we have an account (of which *KB.* XII 3 gives a shorter version) of a dispute evidently borrowed from life between a low-born priest and his fellows at a sacrifice. Another extract (*AB.* VII 27) mentions a dispute between a king and a priestly family whom he despised as lacking in good deeds and speech.

In still other extracts the disputes relate to the details of the sacrificial ritual and their descriptions are marked as such by greater contrasts of character and incidents. We may introduce this subject by quoting the short story (*ŚB.* X 3.4.1f) of a pair well-known to the *Brāhmaṇas* and the older *Upanishads*, namely Śvetaketu Āruṇeya and his father Uddālaka Āruṇi. Here we read that when the son was about to offer

Mānava. Therefore Śāryāta Mānava went around the earth completely, conquering on every side and offered the horse in sacrifice... With this great anointing of Indra Cyavana Bhārgava anointed Śāryāta Mānava. Therefore Śāryāta Mānava went around the earth completely, conquering on every side and offered the horse in sacrifice; at the sacrificial session of the gods he was the householder. With the great anointing

of Indra Somaśuśman Vājaratnāyana anointed Śatānika Sātrājita. Therefore Śatānika Sātrājita went round the earth completely conquering on every side, and offered the horse in sacrifice. With the great anointing of Indra, Parvata and Nārada anointed Āmbāsthya. Therefore Āmbāsthya went round the earth completely, conquering on every side, and offered the horse in sacrifice".

a sacrifice, the father asked his *hotṛi* priest to answer a number of questions. The priest said that he knew some of them, but as for the rest he could only say, 'Nay, but thou wilt teach me, Sir.' In *ŚB.* 5.3.1f the same Uddālaka Āruṇi is presented before us as a masterful and somewhat remorseless disputant. The story of another contest (*ŚB.* XI 4.1.1f and *GB.* 1.3.6) in which Uddālaka Āruṇi figures as one of the disputants is sufficiently impressive to deserve quotation in full. In the former version it runs as follows:—

Now Uddālaka Āruṇi was driving about as a chosen (officiating-priest) amongst the people of the northern country. By him a gold coin was offered; for in the time of our forefathers a prize used to be offered by chosen (priests) when driving about for the sake of calling out the timid to a disputation. Fear then seized the Brāhmaṇas of the northern people. 'This fellow is a Kuru-Pañchāla Brāhmaṇa and son of a Brāhmaṇa: Let us take care lest he should deprive us of our domain: come, let us challenge him to a disputation on spiritual matters.' [After they had chosen Svaidāyana Śaunaka as their champion, he accosted Uddālaka and proved his knowledge of the Full and New Moon sacrifices.] Then he (Uddālaka) gave up to him the gold coin saying, 'Thou art learned, Svaidāyana' and he, having concealed it, went away. They asked him, 'How did that son of a Gautama behave?' He said, 'Even as a Brāhmaṇa and the son of a Brāhmaṇa: the head would fly off of whosoever should (dare to) challenge him to a disputation.' They then went away in all directions. [Then Uddālaka came back to Svaidāyana as a pupil. But the other said, 'I will tell thee even without thy becoming my pupil.']

We have in this extract in the familiar figure of Uddālaka Āruṇi the picture of a typical wandering disputant of Ancient India. In the description of the stakes offered and risked we have an emphatic illustration of the keenness with which such disputes were fought in ancient times. We have, finally, a remarkable series of individualistic representations of character. In Uddālaka Āruṇi we find a redoubtable disputant confident of success and inspiring terror in the hearts of his adversaries. This is explained by reference to a few biographical notices, namely, the teacher's belonging to the sacred Kuru-Pañchāla country and his occupying the office of a chosen priest. But this proud disputant has no hesitation in humbling himself before his victorious foe for acquiring the superior knowledge. On the other hand the Brāhmaṇas from 'the northern country' are pictured as a selfish and faint-hearted stock, caring not for the offered prize, but only for their possessions threatened by their formidable antagonist. As a foil to this unworthy group, we have the attractive figure of Svaidāyana, so unlike other teachers of his class, who spares his beaten foe the humiliation of defeat and magnanimously instructs him in his own superior knowledge.

We may mention in the next place a number of extracts in which kings as well as Brāhmaṇas are represented as taking part in what may

be called intellectual tournaments for the exhibition of their theological knowledge on sundry points of detail. These descriptions provide the authors with ample opportunities for the display of their knowledge of human character. The first story (of which we have two different versions in *ŚB.* X 6. 1*f* and *CU.* V 11) mentions how a number of Brāhmaṇas was instructed on a point of sacrificial ritual by Aśvapati, king of the Kekayas. In the earlier and simpler version the Brāhmaṇas have no hesitation in approaching the king as his pupils for learning the significance of Agni Vaiśvānara, although they are described by him as 'learned' and as 'sons of men learned in the scriptures'. The king on his side readily imparts them this knowledge after making them formally acknowledge him as their teacher. In the later and more complex version, by contrast, the Brāhmaṇas at first approach the ubiquitous Uddālaka Āruṇi who with the characteristic shrewdness of his nature refers them to Aśvapati Kaikeya. 'Those great householders and great theologians,' he reflects, 'will examine me and I shall not be able to tell them all.' The Brāhmaṇas, we are further told, on approaching Aśvapati repel all his offers of hospitality with the cold reply that their object is to acquire knowledge of Vaiśvānara from the king. Aśvapati respects their dignity so far that he imparts his knowledge without exacting from them his formal acknowledgment as a teacher.

The second group of stories centres around the two famous figures of Janaka, king of Videha and the sage Yājñavalkya. Leaving aside the story of *ŚB.* XI 3.1.2*f* which simply tells us in the usual form of a dialogue how the sage correctly answers the questions about the *Agnihotra* ('fire-offering') put to him by the king, we turn to two other extracts from the same work which are sufficiently important to deserve quotation in full.

Now Janaka of Videha, we read in the first extract (*ŚB*XI 6.2.1*f*), "once met some Brāhmaṇas who were travelling about. [Here follow the names]. He said to each of them, 'How do ye each of you perform the *Agnihotra*? [After they had successively answered the king's questions, he told Yājñavalkya], 'Thou, O Yājñavalkya, hast enquired most closely into the nature of the *Agnihotra*...But not even thou knowest either the uprising or the progress or the support or the contentment or the return or the nascent world of these two (libations of the *Agnihotra*).' [After the king had left] they said, 'Surely this fellow of a Rājanya has out-talked us. Come, let us challenge him to a theological disputation.' Yājñavalkya said, 'We are Brāhmaṇas and he is a Rājanya: if we were to vanquish him, whom should we say we have vanquished? But if he were to vanquish us, people would say of us that a Rājanya had vanquished Brāhmaṇas: do not think of this.' They approved of his words. [Yājñavalkya overtook the king and learnt from him the secret of the *Agnihotra*. In return Yājñavalkya granted the king the boon of asking questions when he pleased.] Thenceforth Janaka was a Brāhmaṇa.

Janaka of Videha, we are told in the second extract (*ŚB*.XI 6.3.1*f*),

performed a sacrifice accompanied with numerous gifts to the priests. Setting apart a thousand cows, he said, 'He who is the most learned in sacred writ amongst you, O Brāhmaṇas, shall drive away these (cows).' Yājñavalkya then said, 'This way (drive) them.' They said, 'Art thou really the most learned in sacred writ amongst us, Yājñavalkya?' He replied, 'Reverence be to him who is most learned in sacred writ! We are but hankering after cows.' (After 'the shrewd Śākalya' had volunteered to question Yājñavalkya, the latter asked) 'Have the Brāhmaṇas made of thee a thing for quenching the fire-brand, Śākalya?' [After Yājñavalkya had answered all the questions, he said,] 'Thou hast gone on questioning me beyond the deity beyond which there must be no questioning: thou shalt die ere such and such a day, and not even thy bones shall reach they home!' [And so it came to pass].

The two stories quoted above offer a striking testimony to the author's success in character-drawing. In the first story Yājñavalkya is shown to be as superior to his fellows in learning as in practical wisdom. Though openly charged with ignorance, he yet succeeds in maintaining the superior prestige of his class, and while cleverly learning the secret from the king, he is yet able to confer upon him a favour. In the second story which furnishes a concrete illustration of an enlightened king of those days with his lavish patronage of Brahmanical learning and ritual, we find Yājñavalkya surpassing as usual his fellows in learning as well as practical wisdom. He begins by parrying a direct answer to his claim to possession of the greatest learning, and he successfully answers all the questions put to him by his opponent. In the end, however, he betrays his haughty temper by cursing that opponent, as we are told, with fatal effect.

We may quote finally a unique historical record which differs from all the examples quoted above in being independent of the sacrificial ritual and which approaches the type of historical compositions in the *Rigveda Samhitā*. We refer to ŚB. I 4.1.14f which narrates the story of migration of a band of Vedic Aryans from the mid-Gangetic to the eastern regions.

Māthava, the Videgha, we read, was at that time on the (river) Sarasvatī. Agni thence went burning along this earth towards the east; Gotama Rāhugana and the Videgha Māthava followed after him as he was burning along. He burnt (over) all these rivers. Now that (river) which is called Sadānirā flows from the northern (Himalāya) mountains: that one he did not burn over. That one the Brāhmaṇas did not cross in former times thinking, 'it has not been burnt over by Agni Vaiśvānara.' Now-a-days, however, there are many Brāhmaṇas to the east of it. At that time (the land east of the Sadānirā) was very uncultivated, very marshy, because it had not been tasted by Agni Vaiśvānara. Now-a-days however, it is very cultivated for the Brāhmaṇas had caused (Agni) to taste it through sacrifices... Māthava the

Videgha then said to Agni, 'Where am I to abide?' 'To the east of this (river) be thy abode,' said he.

In this famous and oft-quoted extract the priestly author has preserved the memory of one of the greatest historical events of the *Brāhmaṇa* period, namely, the expansion of Vedic civilization from its central seat in Kurukshetra to the Eastern lands of Kośala and Videha. The author's appreciation of chronology and topography is displayed in his reference to the three successive stages of the advance marked by the original settlement on the Sarasvatī, the reclamation and colonization of the land to the west of the Sadānirā (the later Kośala) and those of the land to the east of the Sadānirā (the later Videha). The progress of the settlers, characteristically enough, is traced to the burning down of the regions concerned by the God of Fire in aid of the colonizing king and priest.

The Older *Upanishads*

The types of historical records preserved in the older *Upanishads*, so far as they go, mark the continuation of those of the *Brāhmaṇas* with some characteristic developments. The first type, that of citations of authorities in support of different doctrinal points, has its parallel in the *Brāhmaṇa* extracts quoted above enumerating the authorities on matters of sacrificial ritual. In *TU. I 9* we read:—

Satyavacas Rāthitara thinks that the true only is necessary. Taponitya Paurāṣiṣṭi thinks that penance only is necessary. Nāka Maudgalya thinks that learning and practising the Veda only are necessary.

As in the case of the corresponding passages in the *Brāhmaṇas*, there is no reason to doubt that the authorities cited above were anything but historical personages.

The second and the more characteristic type consists of stories of theological disputations which are presented as in the *Brāhmaṇas* in the form of a dialogue between the leading figures. This type attains an undoubted development in comparison with the earlier times. The reason has very properly been found by Oldenberg in the contrast between the sacrificial lore of the *Brāhmaṇas* and the higher knowledge of the *Upanishads*. The former, we are told, was on the whole shared equally by a band of experts, while the latter was more or less an individual possession of the elect to be imparted also to favoured individuals. From the standpoint of modern historical criticism the defects of the *Upanishad* dialogues are sufficiently obvious. In them we find an unmistakable element of mythology and folklore, as e. g. in *CU. IV 5f* where the bull of a herd, the fire, a flamingo, and a *madgu* bird are successively mentioned as teaching Satyakāma Jābāla and in *ibid VIII 7f* where God Prajāpati is stated as instructing Indra and the *asura*

Virochana. The frequent references to the splitting of heads of defeated disputants may also contain, as Oldenberg thinks, an element of magic. Nevertheless the dialogues of the *Upanishads*, even more than their prototypes in the *Brāhmaṇas*, may be rightly affirmed to mark a distinct advance in Indian historiography. In the familiar form of dialogues between prince and learned Brāhmaṇa, father and son, husband and wife, they frequently offer, as we shall see presently, charming pictures of contemporary life at the royal court and Brāhmaṇa settlements. In them, again we find faithfully reflected, as shown below, the lights and shades of the various types of character—types which, if not always true to fact, are uniformly drawn from life.²⁷

Let us illustrate the above remarks with a number of examples. We begin with the story (*CU. IV 1*) of a Kshatriya prince and his Brāhmaṇa teacher:—

There lived once upon a time Jānaśruti Pautrāyaṇa who was a pious giver bestowing much wealth upon the people and always keeping open house. He built places of refuge everywhere, wishing that people should everywhere eat of his food. [Overhearing a report from a pair of flamingoes about the superiority of a certain Raikva, the king sent a messenger to search for him. The teacher was found in the forest lying beneath a bullock-team and scratching his sores. When the king offered him cows and ornaments and a carriage, the teacher repulsed him with scorn. It was only when the king offered him his own daughter in marriage along with the above presents that Raikva said,] ‘You have brought these (cows and other presents), Śūdra, but only by that mouth [*scill.* of the girl] did you make me speak?’ [He then instructed the prince in his superior knowledge.]

Leaving aside the element of folklore, the above description brings before us two life-like characters of a type known down to later times in this country. The high-minded prince so generous towards his subjects is prepared in his passionate quest for knowledge to pay any price for its acquisition. By his side stands the proud Brāhmaṇa revelling in his repulsive eccentricities and contemptuous of earthly greatness, but yet vain enough to covet the hand of a princess.

In the other and by far the larger number of examples the above *roles* are reversed, the Brāhmaṇa being said to be worsted in debate by his Kshatriya antagonist who ends by forcing him to become his own disciple. In this type of which we have already observed some specimens in the *Brāhmaṇas* we seem to anticipate some of the famous dialogues of the Buddhist canon wherein the Buddha is made to con-

²⁷ Vide Oldenberg, *Die Lehre Upanishaden und die Anfänge des Buddhismus*, pp. 160-61. Cf. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and the Upanishads*, p. 505. The defects of the Upanishad dialogues from the standpoint of literary form and technique

are well pointed out by Oldenberg, *op. cit.* pp. 168-72. As an illustration of the spirit underlying these dialogues he quotes *JUB. III 8.2* where we are told that ‘whenever one formerly engaged in a theological disputation, they used to wait on him as on one dead’.

found proud Brāhmaṇas with his own superior dialectical skill. In *CU* I. 8 we have the story of a prince who with sly humour reminiscent of the Buddha in the Pali canonical texts, accords the honour of precedence in debate to two Brāhmaṇa disputants only to silence them with his superior knowledge. The story is as follows:—

There were once three men well versed in *Udgītha*, *Śilaka Śālāvatya*, *Caikitāyana Dālbya* and *Pravāhaṇa Jaivali*. [After they had agreed to have a discussion on the *Udgītha*] *Pravāhaṇa Jaivali* said, 'Sirs, do you both speak first, for I wish to hear what two Brāhmaṇas have to say.' [After *Śilaka Śālāvatya* had silenced *Caikitāyana Dālbya* only to be silenced in his turn by *Pravāhaṇa Jaivali*, the latter said], 'Your *Sāman* (the earth), O *Śālāvatya*, has an end. And if any one were to say, "Your head shall fall off (if you be wrong)," surely your head will now fall.' The other could only ask humbly to be taught by the king.

The second story showing how the same prince *Pravāhaṇa Jaivali* prevailed with his superior knowledge over the Brāhmaṇas *Śvetaketu Āruṇeya* and his father—two famous names already known to us from the dialogues in the *Brāhmaṇas*—is narrated in two versions, *CU*. V 3. 1f and *BU*. VI 2. 1f. We quote below the story in the former version:—

Śvetaketu Āruṇeya went to an assembly of the *Pañcālas*. *Pravāhaṇa Jaivali* said to him: 'Boy, has your father instructed you?' 'Yes Sir,' he replied. [After he had failed to answer a series of five questions, the Prince said], 'Then why did you say (you had been) instructed? How could anybody who did not know these things say that he had been instructed?' Then the boy went back sorrowful to the place of his father and said, 'Though you had not instructed me, Sir, you said you had instructed me. That fellow of a *Rājanya* asked me five questions, and I could not answer one of them.' [When the father went to the king's place, the latter said], 'Sir, *Gautama*, ask a boon of such things as men possess.' He replied, 'Such things as men possess may remain with you. Tell me the speech which you addressed to the boy.' [The king, after assuring him that this knowledge did not go to any Brāhmaṇa before and was confined to the *Kshatriyas* alone, proceeded to instruct him duly].

This extract introduces us to an important institution of the *Upanishad* period derived from its predecessor in the period of the Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, namely, the king's council (*samiti* or *parishad*). Further, we have here a series of vividly drawn characters evidently reproduced from life. The prince is merciless in exposing the ignorance of the conceited youth, but is magnanimous enough to place the exclusive knowledge of his order at the disposal of the father as soon as he is convinced of the latter's earnestness. On the other hand, the young *Śvetaketu* is so full of self-conceit that he cannot bear the humiliation of being defeated by 'that fellow of a *Rājanya*', and upbraids his father for failing to instruct him. In sharp contrast with his character is that

of his father who has no hesitation in seeking instruction from the prince and successfully convinces him of his own earnest thirst for knowledge.

The third story in which the above pair, Śvetaketu and his father, are stated to have been confounded by a prince in debate is narrated in *KU. I 1f*:—

Citra Gāṅgyāyani, forsooth, wishing to perform a sacrifice, chose Āruṇi (Uddālaka to be his chief priest). But Āruṇi sent his son Śvetaketu and said, 'Perform this sacrifice for him.' [Śvetaketu, being asked a question by the king, could only reply], 'I do not know this. But let me ask the master.' [His father, however, on being asked the same question, said, 'I also do not know this and he proceeded for instruction to the king's place. Taking fuel in his hand as the mark of a disciple Āruṇi said to the king], 'May I come near to you?' He replied, 'You are worthy of Brahman, O Gautama, because you were not led away by pride. Come hither, I shall make you know clearly.'

In the above story Śvetaketu and Uddālaka bear their usual characteristics. The former is of immature learning, but too proud to accept instruction from a Kshatriya, while the latter thinks it no humiliation to acquire the Kshatriya's superior knowledge. Again, the king, like Pravāhaṇa Jaivali in the passages cited immediately above, is unrelenting towards the conceited Śvetaketu, but magnanimous in his relations with the modest Uddālaka.²⁸

The fourth story of which we have two versions *KU. IV 1f* and *BU. II 1f* gives us a fresh instance of a prince silencing a proud Brāhmaṇa with his superior knowledge.

Bālāki, we are told, was a man of great reading. Volunteering to tell the king the nature of Brahman, he learnt to his mortification that the qualities attributed by him to Brahman were already known to Ajātaśatru. After Bālāki had been reduced to silence, came the king's crushing retort: 'Thus far only (do you know), O Bālāki,' to which the latter could only signify his humble assent. In the *KU.* version the king completes his triumph by saying, 'Vainly did you challenge me,' saying, 'Shall I tell you Brahman?' When however Bālāki actually came forward as a pupil, the magnanimous king cried out: 'I deem it improper that a king should initiate a Brāhmaṇa. Come, I shall make you know clearly.' And so he proceeded to instruct the Brāhmaṇa.

We may quote finally a group of stories in which Janaka, king of Videha, and the sage Yājñavalkya already known to us from the dialogues of the *Brāhmaṇas* take the leading part. In two instances (*BU. IV 1f* and *ibid. 3f*) Yājñavalkya so well instructs Janaka in philosophical

²⁸ In thorough accord with the above is the charming account (*CU. VI 1f*) of the young Śvetaketu returning from his teacher's house 'conceited, considering

himself well-read and stern' and of Uddālaka's disabusing him of his self-conceit.

truths that the gratified king finally offers himself and his people as slaves to the teacher. These extracts which furnish a fresh illustration of the extraordinary love of learning characteristic of the enlightened princes of those days evidently falls into line with the *CU.* passage (IV 1) quoted above relating to a Kshatriya prince and his Brāhmaṇa instructor. In the third and the most important example, *BU.* III 1—which is an amplification of *ŚB.* XI 6.3.1f—we are told how Janaka arranged a kind of intellectual tournament in which Yājñavalkya carried off the prize of victory. The story runs as follows:—

Janaka Vaideha sacrificed with a sacrifice at which many presents were offered to the priests (of the *Aśvamedha*). Brāhmaṇas of the Kurus and the Pañcālas had come thither, and Janaka Vaideha wished to know which of those Brāhmaṇas was the best read. [He offered a prize of one thousand cows to the wisest among them. When Yājñavalkya asked his pupil to drive away the cows], the Brāhmaṇas became angry and said, 'How could he call himself the wisest among us?'. [One of them, *Aśvala*, who was the *hotṛi* priest of Janaka, pointedly asked], 'Are you indeed the wisest among us O Yājñavalkya?' He replied, 'I bow before the wisest, but I wish indeed to have these cows'. [After this Yājñavalkya was questioned at great length by successive persons all of whom he reduced to silence. To the lady *Gārgī Vācakanavī* who plied him with questions about Brahman, Yājñavalkya at length cried out,] 'O *Gārgī*, do not ask too much, lest thy head should fall off.' After that *Gārgī* held her peace. [But after a time she again challenged Yājñavalkya to a fresh discussion with a remarkable simile illustrating the assimilation of these intellectual combats with military contests]. 'O Yājñavalkya,' she said, 'as the son of a warrior from the *Kāśis* or the *Videhas* might string his loosened bow, take two pointed foe-piercing arrows in his hand and rise to do battle, I have risen to fight thee with two questions.' [When she was again silenced by her superior opponent, she declared,] 'Venerable Brāhmaṇas, you may consider it a great thing, if you get off by bowing before him. No one, I believe, will defeat him in any argument concerning Brahman.' [When in spite of this warning, *Vidagdha Śākalya* challenged Yājñavalkya with a series of questions, the latter ended by questioning him about the Self, saying,] 'If thou shalt not explain him to me, thy head will fall'. *Śākalya* did not know him and his head fell, nay, thieves took away his bones, mistaking them for something else.

As in the parallel *Brāhmaṇa* passage quoted above we have here a typical contemporary picture of an enlightened royal court with its lavish patronage of Brahmanical learning and ritual. The character of Yājñavalkya, again, as in the preceding example is marked by a distinctive individuality. While cleverly parrying a direct answer to the question about his claim to superior learning, he has no difficulty in crushing his opponents with his deeper knowledge of the Self. But he betrays the implacable side of his nature by warning the lady *Gārgī* and by cursing the unfortunate *Śākalya*, as we are told, with fatal effect.

General Remarks

Summing up our estimate of the oldest surviving fragments of the Indian historical literature as described in this chapter, we may state that they are admittedly marked by serious defects. These consist, as we have endeavoured to show above, in their mixture of mythology and folk-lore, in their implicit acceptance of the operation of supernatural forces on human affairs, in their slight attention to topography and their almost complete neglect of chronology.²⁹ Nevertheless they occupy an important place in the evolution of Indian historiography. The imperious urge of the R̥gvedic seers to celebrate the achievements of their royal patrons along with their own together with the evident anxiety of the authors of the later works to find support for their doctrinal or ritual points in past antecedents, led them to create several distinct types of traditional history. As yet these examples did not approach the character of a system. But beyond doubt they collectively embodied a mass of genuine tradition which was afterwards utilised by the authors of the systematic genealogical lists of royal dynasties and priestly families in the Epics and the *Purāṇas*. Above all, we have in the various classes of compositions above mentioned, contained in solution, as it were, most of the types of historical workmanship found in later times, especially those of sacred biography and church-history along with systematic royal and dynastic chronicles.

²⁹The neglect of chronology by the Vedic authors is best illustrated by the immense difficulties attending the efforts of modern scholars to introduce some order and sequence in their references to historical characters and events. We may refer firstly to the distinction drawn by Oldenberg (*ZDMG*, Vol. XLII pp. 199-247) on the basis of a thorough and penetrating analysis of the relevant data, between two successive landmarks in the R̥gvedic chronology, namely, those

represented by the series of kings Sudās—Purukutsa—Trasadasyu and the series Parikshit—Janamejaya. Reference may also be made to the attempts made by some Indian scholars (S. N. Pradhan, *The Chronology of Ancient India* and Hemchandra Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, Part I, Chaps. 2-3) to reconstruct in part the dynastic history of the Vedic period by co-ordinating the Epic and the Purāṇic material with the Vedic.

CHAPTER II*

EARLY BUDDHIST HISTORIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTORY

It would obviously be improper to judge by modern critical standards the old Buddhist historical or quasi-historical texts such as we find embedded in the Pāli and Sanskrit canonical literatures. They transport us to an atmosphere where heroic poetry was very much in vogue, where beast-fables delighted the hearts of the learned and unlearned alike, where the doctrines of rebirth and *karma* were held to have undisputed sway over the lives and actions of men. The pious monks, probably the reciters (*bhāṇakas*) of the discourses, who composed the texts long after the event, looked upon their Master as the great Pathfinder, possessed of the threefold knowledge and the ten powers, who had qualified himself for his high calling by his strenuous striving in previous successive rebirths.¹ And yet it is not unprofitable to study their works if only to discover the successive layers of the legend and the principles of their growth. In the present chapter it is proposed to deal with a small portion of this subject, viz., the biography of the Buddha, the lives of Buddhist saints and the history of the Buddhist Church being reserved for a separate treatment.

Having thus defined the scope of this Chapter as comprising the domain of Buddha's biography, we have to state at the outset that this type of historical composition was anticipated in a cruder form in the antecedent Vedic literature: The Brāhmanas, as we have seen in the preceding Chapter, certain *Vaṃsa's* meaning lists of teachers of the Vedic sacrificial ritual. These teachers sometimes comprising fifty or sixty names in lineal succession are credited with handing down of one or other portion of the ritual form the Gods. Apart from these general lists, individual teachers like Yājñavalkya and Śāṇḍilya are quoted as authorities for distinct portions of the later Vedic *Samhitās* and the

* On the canonical literature of the Buddhist schools see now the exhaustive survey in Etienne Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien* (Louvain, 1958) pp. 163-210. For a popular account of the work 2500 years of Buddhism edited by P. V. Bapat (1956) may be consulted. A comparative study of six Vinaya schools (namely, those of the Sarvāstivādins, the Dharmaguptakas, the Mahīśāsakas, the Sthaviravādins, the Mūlasarvāstivādins and the Mahāśāṃghikas) leading to the hypothesis of an original Vinaya text going back to the

fourth century B.C. has been undertaken by E. Frauwallner, *The Earliest Vinaya and The Beginnings of Buddhist Literature* (Rome, 1956) Earlier works on the subject are *Buddhism, its history and literature* by T. W. Rhys Davids (New Ed, London 1926) and *Histoire de Buddhism dans l'Inde* by H. Kern (Paris, 1901).

¹ The conception of Buddha's personality in the Pali canon is discussed by E. J. Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought*, pp. 148-50.

Brāhmaṇas. But these authors were essentially interpreters of the sacred tradition which had gathered into a great mass in course of time. It was therefore no wonder that the *vaṃśas* remained mere lists of names without even the elements of a biography. On the other hand the rise of various religious movements at the epoch of the rise of Buddhism brought into the forefront a number of persons who were marked out from their predecessors by their more or less distinctive teachings, who personified as it were in themselves the whole of their message. Nothing, therefore, could be more natural than that the lives of these Masters should from the first form the subject of reverent investigations by their disciples. What we have said about the biographies of these teachers would apply in a like manner to the history of their religious orders. It is only with two of these religious movements, Buddhism and Jainism and more specially with the first that the student of early Indian historiography is concerned.

In the whole range of Pāli canonical literature, there is no connected biography of Buddha. Interspersed with the canonical texts on Doctrine and Discipline, however, is a number of episodes describing the Master's ancestry and birth, His infancy and youth, His renunciation, austerities and enlightenment, His career as a wandering preacher and lastly His *nirvāṇa*. The same appears to have been the case with the oldest parts of the Sanskrit canon. Out of these separate legends were woven in later times and with numerous additions, complete biographies of the Buddha, such as we find in the Pāli commentaries and chronicles as well as in the Sanskrit *Mahāvastu* and *Lalitavistara*.

The form and contents of the early Buddhist historical or semi-historical texts were determined by the circumstances of their origin. Like all expanding religions Buddhism was split up in course of time into a number of schools or sects. The present Pāli canonical literature represents the scriptures of only one of these schools, the Theravādins. There is good reason to believe that a canonical literature essentially similar to this one existed already in the time of Aśoka. The canonical literature of other schools has been preserved in the form of Sanskrit and Prakrit fragments of the original texts recently brought to light in Kashmir and Central Asia, as well as in extensive Tibetan, Chinese and other translations. It is however a curious fact that the sacred works of these sects at first were handed down by oral tradition alone and were not put to writing till centuries afterwards. Thus according to a tradition of the *Dīpavaṃsa* and the *Mahāvāṃsa* which has been accepted as trustworthy, the Pāli *Tripiṭaka* along with its commentaries was fixed in writing for the first time under the Sinhalese king Vaṭṭagāmaṇi in the first century B.C. Now the oral mode of transmitting the canon has been traditional in India since the early Vedic times, and it has been shown in the case of the Vedic literature how it was possible nevertheless by a series of elaborate arrangements to preserve the purity of the sacred texts with conspicuous success. In so far as the Buddhist

doctrinal teachings are concerned, the oral transmission was attended with the same happy results. A comparison of the scriptures of the Theravādins with those of the Mahāsaṅghikas and the Sarvāstivādins shows not only a common doctrinal basis, but also a common arrangement of discourses and monastic rules. In the case of the stories and legends of Buddha's life, however, there was from the first a strong doctrinal motive for transforming his personality into that of a Superman. In this process of transformation, the authentic fact of the Teacher's life tended to be obscured or forgotten, while numerous legends gathered around the various incidents of his career from his conception to his *Nirvāṇa*. How early these legends found their way into recognition will appear from the fact that the romantic tales of Buddha's miraculous conception and birth and the dogmatic beliefs about the six preceding Buddhas occur in the texts of the Pāli canon as well as on the relief sculptures of the Bharhut *stūpa* going back to the second century B.C.²

Beginning with the ancestry of the Buddha, we have a Pāli cononical discourse, the *Ambaṭṭha-Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya* which gives a story of the folk-lore type about the origin of the Śākya. There the origin is traced to the eponymous ancestors, four brothers and their sisters, who, expelled by their royal father at the behest of their step-mother, took refuge on the Himalayan slopes where they intermarried with each other to preserve the purity of their race. From the polemical way in which this story of Śākya origins is put forward—as an answer to a proud Brāhmaṇa's description of them as menials—it would seem that there was at this time some dispute about the ancestry of the Śākya people. Whatever that may be, the above story marks a deliberate attempt to ennoble the origin of the Buddha, which is not justified by the incidental allusions to the comparative insignificance of the Śākya stock in other parts of the canon. Of the genealogy of the Buddha, the Pāli canon gives very slender details. Only in such admittedly late *Suttas* as the *Mahāpadāna-Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya* and the *Buddhavaṃsa*

² The early canonical texts containing fragments of Buddha's biography and the later complete biographies in Sanskrit (or Sanskritic) languages are analysed by Lamotte, *op. cit.* pp. 718-33. See also on this subject E. Frauwallner, *op. cit.*, pp. 42ff. The questions of date and authorship of the original biographies of the Buddha are discussed by L. Finot, *Textes historiques du canon Pali* (J. As. 1932) p. 158, and more recently by E. Frauwallner *op. cit.*, pp. 43ff and 155ff. Finot gives reasons for the existence of an original chronicle of the Buddha's last days and death as well as the beginnings of the Buddhist Church which was drawn upon in the *Sūtra* and *Vinaya* schools of the Pāli canon. Going further than

the above Frauwallner, *op. cit.* p. 163, holds that the original biography of the Buddha was created by the author of the oldest Khandaka section of the *Vinaya* as the framework of his description of the rules of monastic discipline. The factors of development of the Buddha legend are classified by Lamotte, *op. cit.*, pp. 733-56 under six heads, namely, (a) necessity of justifying details in the original stories, (b) stories of sacred spots, (c) the oral tradition inspired largely by the artists of the Graeco-Buddhist school of Gandhāra, (d) direct borrowing from Western literary sources, (e) claim of distant regions to have been visited by the Buddha, and (f) claim of early families to descent from the Śākya.

involving the dogmatic belief in a succession of Buddhas, do we come across the names of Gautama's father and mother along with his birth-place. There is no trace in the Pāli canonical literature of any attempt on the one hand to connect the Śākya with Mahāsammata, the first king of the present cycle according to Buddhist beliefs, and on the other to carry forward the descent of Śākya kings to Buddha. Such connected accounts are found for the first time in the Pāli commentaries and chronicles, in the Sanskrit and mixed Sanskrit works like the *Mahāvastu*, the *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins and the *Lalitavistara*. There can be little doubt that these later developments were inspired by the Purāṇic accounts of the descent of royal houses from the fabled Manu, the son of Vivasvān.³

Of the Nativity of the Buddha, we have a number of stories or legends alike in the Theravāda (Pāli) canon and in the Sanskrit canon of the Sarvāstivādins and other sects. In its simplest and most general form it occurs in the *Soṇadaṇḍa-Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya* where it is said that the Samaṇa Gotama is "well-born on both sides, of pure descent through the mother and through the father back through seven generations with no slur put upon him and no reproach in respect of birth." With this contrast the elaborate account in the *Achchhariya-abbhuta-dhamma-Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*, which Ānanda recounts to the assembled monks "exactly as he has heard it from the lips of his Master." The Bodhisattva lived in his Tushita form during the whole term of his existence. Leaving this form he entered his mother's womb to the accompaniment of a measureless vast effulgence. As soon as he enters his mother's womb, four deities guard the four cardinal points to keep watch over the precious child, while the mother is freed from all physical and mental ailments. The mother gives birth in an erect position, and the child as it issues out from her womb is received by the gods and bathed with two jets of water starting from mid-air. Then he takes seven strides to the north proclaiming his pre-eminence. This is attended as before by the outburst of supernatural effulgence. The above extract, it will be seen, professes to trace Buddha's antecedent existence in the Tushita heaven ("Heaven of Delight"). The characteristic incident of the Bodhisattva assuming the form of a white elephant, however, before entering his mother's womb, is not found till we reach the period of the Bharhut *stūpa* (2nd century B.C.) and later works like the *Nidānakathā*, the *Mahāvastu* and the *Lalitavistara*⁴.

³ Common doctrinal basis of Buddhist schools:—Thomas, *Early Buddhist Scriptures*, Introd. p. XII. Legends of Gautama Buddha and previous Buddhas in Bharhut reliefs:—B. M. Barua, *Bharhut*, Book II, pp. 11-14, Plates XXVIII 2 & XXIX 5, pp. 1-7, Plates XXIX 1, 2, 3 & XXXI 3.

Sutta, Dīgha N. Vol. I pp. 92-93 (tr. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues*...Vol. I, pp. 114-15). On *Mahāpadāna Sutta* and *Buddhavaṃsa* vide fn. 7 below. Later genealogical accounts of the Buddha:—(a) Buddhaghosa's commy. on *Ambaṭṭha Sutta* (tr. E. J. Thomas, *Life of the Buddha*, pp. 7-10); (b) *Mahāvastu*, Vol. I, p. 338f; (c) Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, Chap. I.

⁴ Origin of the Śākyas:—*Ambaṭṭha*

Another *Sutta* of the Pāli canon, the *Nālaka-Sutta* of *Sutta Nipāta*, of which parallel versions occur in the *Lalitavistara* and the *Nidānakathā*, introduces us to one of the most famous episodes of the Buddha's infancy. This is the visit of the sage Asita to see the Holy Child shortly after His birth. The metrical introduction (*Vatthugāthā*) of the *Nālaka-Sutta*, which contains this legend, belongs to the class of metrical narratives or ballads out of which the later Buddha epic has grown. Not only in its form but in its contents it anticipates the later works; for it describes, through the mouth of the sage, the Bodhisattva's possession of the external marks of the Superman and the famous prophecy of his attaining the summit of enlightenment.⁵

In the *Mahāpadāna-Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya* the career of the Buddha is brought into relation with the Buddhist concept of the great time-cycles (*kalpas*) and their divisions which are marked by diminishing durations of the span of human lives. In course of these *kalpas*, we are told, there have arisen several Buddhas, viz., Vipassi, Sikhi, Vessabhu, Kakusandha, Konāgamana, Kassapa and Gotama. The lives of these Buddhas follow a uniform pattern. For the text gives for each of them in identical phraseology his particular time-cycle, his *jāti* and *gotta*, his tree of enlightenment, his two chief disciples and usual attendant, his parents and birth-place. What is more, the miraculous story of Gotama's conception and birth such as we have quoted from the *Majjhima Nikāya* text above-mentioned is found to be repeated *verbatim* in the case of the first Buddha. The lives or legends of the Buddhas are described at great length in another work of the Pāli canon to which we have referred above. This work is the *Buddhavaṃsa* which is incorporated in the *Khuddaka Nikāya*. It gives in as many chapters the legends of the twenty-four Buddhas supposed to have preceded Gotama in the past twelve ages of the world (*kalpas*), and it winds up in the last chapter with a sort of autobiography describing in Gotama's own words his last earthly existence. The tendency towards schematization noticed above reaches its climax in this work where the same principal incidents are repeated in a very monotonous fashion about the career of each of these Buddhas.⁶

It will be noticed from the above that we have here, as in other cases,

⁵ Legend of Nativity of the Buddha:—(a) *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta*, *Dīgha N.* Vol. I, p. 115 (tr. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues...* Vol. I, p. 147); (b) *Achhchhariya-abbhuta-dhamma-sutta*, *Majjh. N.* Vol. III, pp. 119-22 (tr. Chalmers, *Further Dialogues...* Part II, p. 223f, Thomas, *Life...* pp. 30-31). A separate work called the *Chariyāpiṭaka* professing to narrate the previous lives of the Buddha belongs to the *Suttapiṭaka*. For the Bharhut relief depicting the Bodhisattva's descent in the shape of a six-tusked white elephant into his mother's womb,

vide the work *Bharhut* by Beni Madhav Barua, Book II, pp. 11-13 and Plate XXVIII 2.

⁶ Visit of Asita to the infant Buddha:—*Nālaka-Sutta*, *Sutta Nipāta*, 679-98 (tr. Thomas, *Early Buddhist Scriptures*, pp. 1-5). Later versions:—(a) *Nidānakathā*, *Jāt.* Vol. I, p. 54f (tr. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Birth Stories*, pp. 157-60); (b) *Lalitavistara*, Lefmann's ed. p. 101f (tr. Thomas, *Life...* pp. 39-41). On the early Buddhist metrical ballads vide Winternitz, *History*, Vol. II, p. 96.

an initial stage of plain and matter-of-fact narrative. In the next stage the narrative has grown into a mythological account professing to trace the story to Buddha's antecedent existence in the Tushita heaven and claiming a supernatural conception and birth for the holy child. In the last stage the legend has been intertwined with Buddhist cosmogonic concepts of *kalpas* with their outcrop of Buddhas, and the whole has been standardised according to a uniform pattern.

The stories or legends of Buddha's renunciation, austerities and enlightenment are told in a number of passages in the Pāli canon. In the *Ariya-pariyesana-Sutta* ("Discourse of the Noble Quest") of *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Bodhisattva tells us that he at first pursued what was subject like himself to rebirth, decay and the rest. Then when he reflected on their vanities, he was led to pursue "the consummate peace of Nirvāṇa which knows neither rebirth nor decay, neither disease nor death, neither sorrow nor impurity." He then started, despite the wishes of his parents, who wept and lamented, to go forth from the householder's to the homeless life. He sought instruction successively from Ālārā Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, but finding no satisfaction he came to the township of Uruvela where he sought and won "the consummate peace of Nirvāṇa." Another equally connected account occurs in the *Mahāsachchaka-Sutta* of *Majjhima-Nikāya*, which speaks of the Renunciation in still more general terms and describes the austerities at great length. Here we are told that the Bodhisattva reflecting on the contrast between life at home and life in the open, donned the yellow robes and went forth from the householder's to a homeless life. There flashed on him the three allegories which led him to practise the hardest austerities, till at last, convinced of their futility, he renounced his fasting and was able to enter into the five successive trances and attain the supreme knowledge.⁷

In contrast with the above more or less general accounts we have other legends and traditions dealing more specifically with this episode of the Buddha's career. A passage in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* attempts to give a dramatic turn to the incidents of the Renunciation. The Buddha, we are told, was a delicately nurtured youth having for himself three lotus pools and three palaces (one for the cold, one for the hot and one for the rainy season). There came to him the poignant reflection on old age, sickness and death, and all the elation in life disappeared. It seems unlikely that the above is based on a genuine historical tradition if only because of the essentially poetical character of the story of the three palaces which is likewise told of Vipassī Buddha in the *Mahāpadāna-Sutta* above quoted and of the noble youth Yasa in the *Mahāvagga* of *Vinaya Piṭaka*. With the further development of the legend in which Gautama's abstract reflections are made to take the concrete shapes of

⁷ Lives or legends of Buddhas:—(a) *Mahāpadāna Sutta*, *Digha N.* Vol. II, p. 2f (tr. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues*...Part II,

p. 5f); (b) *Buddhavaṃsa* (ed. R. Morris, P.T.S., 1882).

an aged man, a sick man and a corpse, followed as a dramatic contrast by the sight of a contemplating hermit, we are not here concerned. It is, however, important to remember that even this development which is found in *Nidānakathā*, the Sarvāstivādin *Vinaya*, and other works, is anticipated in the story of Buddha Vipassī as described in the *Mahāpadāna-Sutta* above mentioned.⁸

The canonical texts above-quoted are silent about the temptation of Māra, which plays such a conspicuous part in the later Buddhist works as well as in Buddhist art from the Gandhāra school downwards. The *Padhāna-Sutta* ('Discourse of Striving') of the *Sutta Nipāta*, however, of which parallel versions exist in the Sanskrit *Mahāvastu* and *Lalitavistara*, contain the first suggestion of this legend. In this *Sutta* not only is Māra said to have vainly tempted Buddha while engaged in the performance of his austerities, but Lust, Aversion, Hunger and Thirst are personified as Māra's armies, and Māra himself is said to have surrounded Buddha with his elephant arrayed in battle. It is easy to understand how the dramatic rendering of Buddha's spiritual struggles during his strivings developed in the later legend into the story of an actual conflict between the Bodhisattva and the Power of Evil at the moment of the former's attaining the supreme enlightenment.⁹

The story of the Buddha's *Parinirvāṇa* and his funeral is told in a number of texts belonging to the canon of the Theravādins (preserved in Pāli) and that of the Mūlasarvāstivādins (preserved in Chinese and Tibetan translations). These consist on the one hand of the *Sagātha-Sutta* of *Saṃyutta Nikāya* and the well-known and oft-quoted *Mahāparinibbāna-Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya*, and on the other hand of the *Nirvāṇa-Sūtras* of *Saṃyukta Āgama* and the corresponding passages of the *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins. To the French scholar Jean Przyluski belongs the credit of the most thorough examination of these different texts so as to make it possible for us to compare their contents. Thus in the first place, the author, after quoting the relevant extracts in a series of parallel columns, comes to the conclusion that the canon of the Sthaviravādins (Theravādins) as much as that of the Mūlasarvāstivādins indicates in the last analysis two *Parinirvāṇa-Sūtras*, one very short and almost entirely recorded in verse (*scil.* the Sanskrit *Saṃyukta Āgama* in the Chinese translation of Guṇabhadra and the

⁸Renunciation, austerities and enlightenment of the Buddha:—(a) *Ariya-pariyesana-Sutta*, *Majj. N. Vol. I*, pp. 160-75 (tr. Chalmers, *Further Dialogues*...Part I, pp. 113-18 and Thomas, *Early Buddhist Scriptures*, pp. 9-15, 23-29); *Mahāvagga* (b) *Dvedhāvitakka* (*Majjh. N. Vol. I*, p. 117) (c) *Mahāsachchaka-Sutta*, *Majjh. N. Vol. I*, pp. 240-49 (tr. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues*... pp. 173-78, Thomas, *Life*...pp. 62-68, Thomas, *Early Buddhist Scriptures*, pp. 19-22). Buddha's reflections on old

age, sickness and death:—*Āṅg. N. Vol. I*, p. 145 (tr. Thomas, *Life*...pp. 47, 51). Cf. (a) *Mahāpadāna-Sutta* (story of Vipassī); (b) *Vin. Vol. I* (*Mahāvagga*) 7.1. (story of Yasa). Later Stories of aged man etc.—(a) *Nidānakathā* (tr. Thomas, *Life*...pp. 52-53); (b) Rockhill, *Life*...p. 22f etc.

⁹Temptation of Māra:—*Padhāna-Sutta, Sutta Nipāta*, 425-29. For later accounts vide *Mahāvastu*, Vol. II, p. 238, and *Lalitavistara*, p. 327.

Pāli *Saṃyutta Nikāya*), and the other which reproduces the stanzas of the above but encloses them with long developments in prose (*scil.* *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins preserved in the Chinese translation of I-tsing and the *Dulva* section of the Tibetan *Bkah-gyur*). Referring in the next place to the two different accounts (after the versified portions of the *Avadānaśataka* and the *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins and the prose text of the *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins and the *Mahāparinibbāṇa-Sutta*) of Buddha's body being covered with the monkish robe (*chīvara*) and with bands of cotton folded a thousand times, he explains how the former tradition which evidently goes back to extreme antiquity was superseded by the latter. Before being deified, we are told, Śākyamuni was in the eyes of the faithful not essentially different from other men: he was (only) the Bhikshu *par excellence*. The most ancient tradition accordingly recorded that he had the funeral of a religious and was shrouded in the *chīvara*. The rise of the popular concept of *Chakravartī* had a profound repercussion upon the legend of the Buddha. Śākyamuni must now appear to be equal or even superior to the legendary kings. The aim of this legend was to show that Śākyamuni in his anterior birth was a mighty *Chakravartin* king, and that the humble village of Kuśa, where he died, was formerly a capital-city more magnificent than the residence of the greatest monarchs. How the new conception influenced the story of the Buddha's funeral is told in the following lines. The ancient ceremonial of Buddha's funeral appeared from that time to be very vulgar. The sacred body, marvellously beautiful, could not have been shrouded in coarse clothes, common and slovenly. Ere long it was accepted that the funeral of Śākyamuni had been as pompous as those of the *Chakravartī* kings. It was even pretended that shortly before his death, he had clearly expressed his intentions on this subject.¹⁰

Let us conclude this brief survey with some general remarks on the nature and services of early Buddhist Historiography. We have seen how the canon presents us as yet not with a connected narrative of the Buddha's biography, but with detached notices relating to the most striking episodes of his career. These notices obviously do not belong to the same chronological or intellectual stratum. Some texts (or portions of the same text) are simple and matter-of-fact accounts, while others are embellished with much legendary and dogmatic matter. We have thus on the one hand the picture of a very human Teacher, earnest in

¹⁰ The above is an abstract of the paper entitled *Le Parinirvāna et les funérailles du Buddha* by J. Przyluski (*Journal Asiatique*, Mai-Juin 1918, pp. 511-12, 514-15). The texts utilised by Przyluski are the following:—(a) *Sagātha-Sutta*, *Sam. N.* Vol. II, p. 157f. (b) *Mahāparinibbāṇa-Sutta*, *Dīgha N.* Vol. II, pp. 72-167 (c) *Saṃyukta Āgama* in Chinese version of Gṇabhadrā (composed between A.D. 435-443);

(d) *Saṃyukta Āgama* in Chinese version of an unknown writer (composed between A.D. 350-431); (e) *Vinaya* of Mūlasarvāstivādin school preserved in the Tibetan *Bkah-gyur* (*Dulva* XI); (f) *Vinaya* of Mūlasarvāstivādins preserved in the Chinese version of I-tsing (Chinese *Tripitaka*, Tokyo Ed. XVII 2); (g) *Avadānaśataka*, ed. Speyer, Canto III, p. 198.

imparting his message to all and sundry, 'remorseless in vanquishing his opponents with his logic, and withal overflowing with human sympathy and kindness. On the other hand there is conjured up before our eyes a Superman having a long series of prototypes in the remote past, the chief incidents of whose career are marked by miracles and legends. In so far as the oldest narratives are concerned, we may grant that they are not the compositions of eye-witnesses, but we have no doubt that they have handed down the genuine tradition of the Founder's career.¹¹ For the rest, the stories of the Buddha's life in the works of the early canonists are not without interest for subsequent times. They lay down in broad outline the legend which was filled in by the authors of the *Aṭṭhakathās* (the source-books of the Pāli commentaries and chronicles) and by the later compilers of Sanskrit quasi-canonical works. Thus was formed what may be called the standard biography of the Buddha which dominated Buddhist art and literature till it was thrown into the shade by the rise of Docetic ideas in the schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

¹¹ We may recall in this connexion Winternitz's criticism (*History*, Vol. II, pp. 598-601) of Otto Francke's view of Buddha as a dogmatic conception. To Winternitz's modern parallel of Keshub Chunder Sen being worshipped by some of his adherents as late as in A.D. 1868 we may add after the the contemporary account of Murari

Gupta (Biman Bihari Majumdar, *Chaitanya Chariter Upādān*, pp. 590-605) the much more impressive mediaeval parallel of Chaitanya, the great Vaishnava reformer of Bengal, who was consecrated as a deity and whose image was set up in different places almost immediately after his renunciation of the world.

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORICAL TRADITIONS IN THE PURĀṆAS

INTRODUCTORY

The Vedic period saw the rise of a class of compositions called *Purāṇas*, which may be said to be the equivalent of the legends of heroes in other lands. These works were included in the currently recognised branches of learning, and, what is more, were dignified with the title of a Veda, while their recitation was made part and parcel of the higher sacrificial as well as of the domestic ritual evidently for didactic purposes. The Vedic *Purāṇas*, however, have been lost except for a few references in the *Dharmasūtras* and other works. In the present chapter we have to deal with a large number of works bearing the same title of *Purāṇas* which in their present form date from the period of the Imperial Guptas from the fourth century onwards and form a valuable section of our old religious literature.¹ According to a well-known definition which is found in many works of this class as well as in some of the standard lexicons, a *Purāṇa* has five characteristics (*pañchalakṣaṇa*). These are (a) original creation (*sarga*), (b) dissolution and re-creation (*pratisarga*), (c) Manu-cycles (*manvantara*) comprising fourteen periods of time with a presiding sage (Manu) for each period, (d) ancient genealogies (*varṇśa*) and (e) accounts of persons mentioned in the genealogies (*varṇśānucharita*). Though none of the extant *Purāṇas* conforms to this strict definition, many of them have preserved the above fivefold content as their nucleus. As the *Purāṇas* are held to have been composed by Vyāsa, a contemporary of the heroes of the Bhārata war at the beginning of the Kali era, their dynastic and genealogical lists close with the death of the Pāṇḍavas or their immediate successors. This list, however, is continued in the form of prophecies of future kings in seven works of this class, namely, the *Matsya*, the *Vāyu*, the *Brahmāṇḍa*, the *Bhavishya*, the *Bhāgavata*, and the *Garuḍa Purāṇas*²: The pioneer work in utilising this vast genealogical material for reconstructions of the ancient history of our land has been done in recent times by F. E. Pargiter in his learned and much discussed book entitled *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*

¹ On the *Purāṇas* of the Vedic period see Chapter I, pp. 11-13. The problems connected with the antiquity and composition of the extant *Purāṇas* as well as their relation to the earlier Vedic and the contemporary or later Brahmanical and Buddhist literature are discussed by Winternitz, *A History*, Vol. I, pp. 517-30. For a general

survey of the contents of the 18 *Mahā-Purāṇas* and a few *Upa-Purāṇas*, vide *ibid*, pp. 530-582.

² For references to the five characteristics of the extant *Purāṇas* vide *Brahmāṇḍa* I, 1.37-38, *Vāyu* 4.10-11, *Matsya* 53.65, *Kūrma* I 1.12, *Śiva* V, 1, 37, *Garuḍa* I, 215.14, *Bhavishya* I, 2.4-5, *Varāha* 2. 4.

(London 1922). Pargiter's reconstruction of the ancient Purāṇic tradition is based upon some fundamental principles such as that of the superiority of the Kshatriya (Purāṇic and Epic) to the Brāhmaṇa (Vedic) tradition, while it leads him to a number of far-reaching conclusions, such as the entrance of the Aryans ("Ailas") into Northern India from the Middle Himalayan region (c. 2050 B.C.) and the overflow of the Aryan branch of the Druhyus beyond the North-West of India into Western Asia (c. 1600 B.C.). A number of Indian authors have since attempted wholly or partially to traverse the field covered by the industrious English scholar. In the present chapter it is proposed to recapitulate some of the most important attempts in this direction and to assess the historical worth of the Puranic traditions accordingly.³

I. 'Chronology of Ancient India'

We begin our survey with an analysis of two valuable studies of selected periods of the Ancient Indian traditional history in recent times. In his work *Chronology of Ancient India* (Calcutta 1927) Dr. S. N. Pradhan has endeavoured to prepare a dynastic history of what he calls "the Late *Rigvedic* period" extending from the time of the Vedic king Divodāsa down to that of the *Mahābhārata*. This is supplemented by his brief notice of two later royal dynasties, namely, those of Magadha under the lines of Bimbisāra and Mahāpadma Nanda and of Avanti under the house of Pradyota. The author clearly explains his methodology in his Preface, where while deprecating exclusive reliance upon the Vedic data for preparing a political history of Vedic India, he describes the *Purāṇas* as supplying the connecting links in the long chain of historical events. In the course of his subsequent scholarly and thorough reconstruction of the dynastic history, however, the author has frequently modified or corrected the Purāṇic genealogies as regards the sequence and synchronism (and even the names) of the individual kings in the light of the more authentic data derived from the *Rigveda* and later Vedic works, and he has sought to bring order and harmony into the discrepant Purāṇic accounts by utilising the parallel versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Harivaṃśa* and so forth. In some of his concluding chapters the author has similarly corrected by reference to the parallel Buddhist and Jaina sources the confused Purāṇic genealogies of the later kings. The results are summarized at the end in a synchronistic table of royal genealogies and succession of Vedic teachers. As regards his chronological scheme, the author begins by rejecting the Purāṇic tradition of the interval (1015 or 1050 years) between the birth of Parikshit and the coronation of Mahāpadma Nanda on the ground of its late date,

³ On Pargiter's view of the distinction between Brāhmaṇa and Kshatriya tradition, vide *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, pp. 58-77. The dates of Aila

migration to northern India and the outspread of the Druhyus into Western Asia are explained by the same writer in *ibid.*, p. 301.

as well as the Varāhamihira-Kalhana tradition of the accession of Yudhiṣṭhira in the year 653 of the Kali era because of its "fanciful interpretation" of the astronomical data. He takes instead three parallel dynastic lists (the Kosala, Magadha and Paurava lines) intervening between the times of the *Mahabhārata* war (c. 1150 B. C. according to his calculation) and the late Vedic period and reckoning the duration of thirteen generations (approximately) of kings of these dynasties on an average (deduced from a comparison of known genealogies) of twentyeight years for each generation, gives for Divodāsa the date 1150 B.C. + 13×28 years = 1514 B.C. Coming to the later dynasties the author rejects the Purāṇic traditional reign-periods of the kings on the four-fold ground that these were calculated on a chaotic order of succession of kings, that no single *Purāṇa* agrees with another, that the details do not agree with the total, and that they were done in the early Gupta period by Purāṇists who had no sufficient materials with them. He fixes instead the chronology of the Prādyota and Magadha lines by utilizing the external evidence of the Buddhist and Jaina traditions. This gives the date 547 B.C. for the accession of Bimbisāra and corresponding dates for later reigns.⁴

II. 'Political History of Ancient India'

We may now turn to the learned work of Dr. Hemchandra Raychaudhuri entitled *Political History of Ancient India* (5th edition, 1950). It is divided into two unequal Parts: Part I dealing with the history of the period from the accession of Parikshit (of the Pūru or Bharata line) down to the coronation of Bimbisāra (of the Magadha line), and Part II carrying the history thenceforth down to the extinction of the Gupta dynasty. Referring to the historical sources for the first period, the author holds that the *Atharvaveda*, the *Brāhmaṇsa* and the classical *Upanishads* give us "most valuable information," while the Epics and the *Purāṇas* in their present shape are not suited to serve as the foundation of this history, although containing much old and valuable material. The author accordingly rejects two extreme views, namely, that of Prof. Keith who disbelieves the historicity of any event not explicitly mentioned in the *Vedas*, and that of Mr. Pargiter who holds that Vedic literature is wanting in "the historical sense" and as such "should not always be trusted." In reconstructing the political history of the first period (subdivided into the Age of Parikshit and his family, that of the Videhas and their contemporaries, and that of the sixteen Great States of the

⁴ *Vide Chronology of Ancient India*, Preface, p. xx (authority of *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*), Chaps. I-XIII (Purāṇic genealogies of the Vedic Divodāsa and his contemporaries, the Yadus, the Bhārgavas, the Magadha and Hastināpur lines, the Northern and the Southern Pañchāla lines, the Ikshvākus

of Ayodhyā and the Janakas of Videha, the Aṅgas, the Southern Kosalas and the Kāśis), Chaps. XX-XXI (Purāṇic genealogies of the later Magadha and the Prādyota dynasties). Chaps. XVI, XVIII, XXI-XXII and Table on p. 246 (Purāṇic chronologies of kings), Chap. XXIII (date of Bhārata war.)

Buddhist-Jaina texts) the author maintains a severely critical attitude towards the Purāṇic tradition, which he checks at every step by a thorough and exhaustive reference to the scattered data of the Vedic and subsequently of the Buddhist-Jaina literature. Thus while he finds *contra* Prof. Keith Vedic allusions to the hostility between the Kurus and the Śrīñjayas as well as to the heroes of the Mahābhārata, he proves the error of the Purāṇic statement that the Pūru King Janamejaya and the Videha King Janaka were contemporaries, and that the founder of the royal family of Mithilā was Nimi said to be a son of Ikshvāku. Criticising in a later context the Purāṇic genealogy of the Ikshvāku kings from its first king Ikshvāku himself to Prasenajit (shown in the Buddhist accounts to be a contemporary of Gautama Buddha), the author enumerates with examples four glaring defects of the Purāṇic lists. These comprise: firstly, the mixing up of kings of different branches of the dynasty and perhaps also princes of other tribes so as to make up a continuous line of monarchs in regular succession: secondly, descriptions of contemporaries as successors and collaterals as lineal descendants: thirdly, omission of certain names of kings: and fourthly, inclusion of a clan-designation (Śākya) and a person who never ruled (Siddhārtha). He concludes by showing how only three Ikshvāku kings in the *Purāṇa* lists are known also from Vedic and early Buddhist texts to have reigned in Kośala or in its outlying parts.

Coming to the chronology of the ancient period, the author first holds that the dates (3102 B.C. and 2499 B.C.) of two ancient schools of astronomers and historians for the Bhārata war are both doubtful. The Purāṇic figure (1050 years according to some versions) of the interval between the birth of Parikshit and the coronation of Mahāpadma which would assign Parikshit to the fourteenth or fifteenth century B.C. is equally beset with difficulties. The attempt to support this Purāṇic date by calculations based on a number of Vedic lists of teachers and their pupils rests upon a pure hypothesis of the date of those lists (c. 500 B.C.). As regards his own view the author by finding for a certain Vedic teacher (Guṇākhyā Śāṅkhāyana) the date sixth century B.C. and reckoning backwards the antecedent eight or nine spiritual generations on an average of thirty years for each generation, places Parikshit in the ninth century B.C. Discussing the date of Janaka, the famous king of Videha, the author argues in the light of some Vedic lists of teachers that he was separated by five or six generations from Janamejaya, the son of Parikshit. This places Janaka $5 \text{ or } 6 \times 30 = 150 \text{ or } 180$ years after Janamejaya, and two centuries after Parikshit.

Passing to the second period the author criticises the Purāṇic genealogical lists with even greater severity than before. Referring to the list of the Magadha kings he shows firstly that the Purāṇic chronology and order of succession of the first line of kings (the Bārhadrathas) cannot be accepted as authentic for want of corroborative evidence. Secondly, he rejects with Dr. Pradhan the Purāṇic account of the second dynasty

which makes out Śiśunāga to be its progenitor and Bimbisāra to be one of his descendants. His argument is that the Purāṇic genealogy is contradicted by the evidence of the Pāli texts and the references in ancient Sanskrit poets and dramatists which make Bimbisāra and his son precede Śiśunāga. In fixing the chronology of these dynasties the author altogether ignores the Purāṇic lists of the reign-periods of the kings. He combines instead the Simhalese evidence of the interval $(52+8=60)$ years between the accession of Bimbisāra and the death of Gautama Buddha with the Cantonese date (486 B.C.) of the latter event. This gives the date $486 \text{ B.C.} + 59 \text{ years} = 545-544 \text{ B.C.}$ as the date of Bimbisāra's accession. Referring in a later context to the list of the Āndhra (Sātavāhana) kings, the author points out two different Purāṇic traditions on this point, one of 17, 18 or 19 years with a total duration of 300 years, and another of 30 kings with a rule for 400 years. He reconciles the two traditions by stating that while the longer list includes kings of the main (Pratishthāna) and the branch (Kuntala) line, the shorter list refers to kings of the former line alone. The author accepts the unanimous testimony of the *Purāṇas* about the contemporaneity of the founder of the dynasty with the last king of the Kāṇva dynasty. This makes the dynasty begin in the first century B.C. and end in Northern Deccan in the third century A.D.⁵

III. 'The Vedic Age'

We may next consider two complete or nearly complete surveys of the whole field of the Purāṇic historical tradition that have been attempted in recent times. In chapters XIV-XV of the work called *The Vedic Age* Dr. A. D. Pusalker divides his subject into two great periods, one extending from the earliest times to the accession of Parikshit, and the other carrying the history thenceforth to the end of the Bārhadratha dynasty of Magadha. In the first chapter he first mentions the defects of the Purāṇic tradition, namely, its distance of more than two thousand years from the earliest recorded events, its exaggeration, its mythological details, its strong religious bias and the divergence among its different versions. Nevertheless, says the author, the *Purāṇas*, being based upon royal genealogies and ballads of kings and heroes preserved from very early times by the *sūtas*, contain many genuine historical traditions of great antiquity not found elsewhere. Further, the Purāṇic account is corroborated in many respects by the Vedic texts containing contemporary historical data. By contrast the genealogical accounts in the *Mahābhārata* are not ancient, and those in the *Rāmāyaṇa* are not sufficiently authentic. Discussing in a later context the relative value

⁵ *Vide Political History of Ancient India*, pp. 2-3, 6-9 (authority of *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*), pp. 7, 40-42 (date of Bhārata war), pp. 27-36 (date of Parikshit), pp. 50-52 (date of Janaka), p. 104

(defects of Purāṇic list of Kosala kings) pp. 114-17, 225-27 (genealogy and chronology of lines of Magadha kings), pp. 406-08 (genealogy and chronology of Āndhra or Sātavāhana kings).

of the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas* as sources of traditional history, the author first observes that while the Vedic texts have the advantage of priority of date and comparative freedom from textual corruption, the *Purāṇas* alone have preserved a continuous historical narrative with elaborate royal genealogies which could not be mere figments of the imagination, or a tissue of falsehoods. In the next place the author, after demonstrating the absence of any irreconcilable contradiction or conflict between the Vedic and the Purāṇic accounts, defines the proper procedure for treatment of traditional history as comprising utilisation of the joint testimony of Vedic and the Purāṇic texts wherever available, and reconciliation of the apparently conflicting texts. To draw upon isolated Vedic texts alone for the political history of the ancient period is, in the author's opinion, to ignore the exclusively religious character of the Vedic literature. Finally the author observes that though the Purāṇic traditions cannot be accepted as genuine historical facts so long as they are not corroborated by other reasonable evidence, they form a preliminary step for the discovery of genuine history. As regards the early Purāṇic chronology the author argues that both the Āryabhaṭa and the Varāhamihira-Kalhaṇa traditions of the date of the *Mahābhārata* war are based on a hypothetical reckoning of a late date, while the astronomical references to the position of the stars and planets in the *Mahābhārata* are so self-contradictory as to preclude a satisfactory and acceptable conclusion from their evidence. Again we are told that Pargiter's date (c. 950 B.C.) for the *Mahābhārata* war is contradicted by the Purāṇic statement (1015 or 1050 years) between the birth of Parikshit and the coronation of Mahāpadma. This last figure which is corroborated, as the author thinks, by the *vaṃśa* list of teachers in the *Vedas*, gives for the Bhārata war the date 1015 B.C. + 382 years ("the date of Mahāpadma's accession", more correctly, that of his extinction of contemporary dynasties, quoted from Pargiter), i.e. 1397 B.C. or in round numbers 1400 B.C. Counting 95 generations (after the Purāṇic tradition) between Manu Vaivasvata and the Bhārata war and taking with Pargiter an average of 18 years for each generation, the author finally puts the date of Manu (Vaivasvata) as 1400 B.C. + 95×18 years, i.e. 3110 B.C. As this last figure very nearly corresponds to 3102 B.C., the traditional date of the beginning of the Kali Age, the author suggests that it stands for the date of the Great Flood at which Manu (according to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and other works) saved humanity. Counting the generations after Manu and giving the average of 18 years to each generation the author fixes a number of subsequent chronological landmarks. At the end of these calculations the author attempts a reconstruction of the whole history of the ancient period which he divides into eight sections. These are:—(1) Pre-flood and the dawn of history', (2) 'The flood and Manu Vaivasvata (c. 3100 B.C.)', (3) 'The Yayāti period (c. 3000-2750 B.C.)', (4) 'The Māndhātṛi period (c. 2750-2550 B.C.)', (5) 'The Paraśurāma period (c. 2550-2350 B.C.)', (6) 'The Rāma-

chandra period (c. 2350-1950 B.C.), (7) 'The Kṛishṇa period (c. 1950-1403 B.C.)', (8) 'The Bhārata war (c. 1400 B.C.)'. The author's reconstruction, which follows broadly the lines of Pargiter's treatment, shows how the different royal dynasties developed out of an original stem, and how some of these (the Ikshvākus, "the Ailas" and the Haihayas) not to speak of individual kings like Māndhātā and Sagara, successively expanded their dominion over considerable parts of the country at the expense of the rest. Criticising the Purāṇic version of expansion of the Indian royal dynasties, the author observes that it implies that the whole of Southern India as well as Ceylon had been colonised by the Aryans, or brought under their influence by the time of Rāma in the *Tretā* Age. On the other hand according to the incidental and therefore all the more valuable references in the older literature the Aryans had not advanced beyond the middle region of Northern India till after the Vedic Age when most of the Purāṇic dynasties had ceased to exist, and they first came into contact with South India between the times of Pāṇini (6th century B.C.) and Kātyāyana (4th century B.C.). This necessarily casts a grave doubt upon the Purāṇic location of the principalities and kingdoms occupied by the Indian dynasties in the course of their expansion.

In the second chapter quoted above which deals principally with three royal dynasties, namely, the Pauravas of the Upper Ganges valley subsequently divided into a main (Hastināpur) and a branch (Indraprastha) line, the Ikshvāku kings of Kosala and the kings of Magadha, the author implicitly accepts the Purāṇic account of the first dynasty. Indeed he finds in the myth of Janamejaya's performance of a snake-sacrifice to avenge his father's death from the snake-king's bite a reference to the historical fact that the king of the Nāgas in Gandhāra attacked and killed Parikshit, whose son led an avenging expedition against them into their own country. On the other hand the author condemns the Purāṇic genealogy of the second dynasty (in which Śākya, Śuddhodana, Rāhula and Prasenajit are given as names of kings in lineal succession) as a typical instance of the confused blending of different historical traditions at a late date, and he turns instead to the Buddhist sources for its reconstruction. Similarly he condemns the later Purāṇic genealogy of the third dynasty in which according to him "the independent lists of the dynasties of Pradyota, Śisunāga and Bimbisāra have been placed in a false sequence and supplied with imaginary connecting links".⁶

IV. 'Purāṇapraveśa'

More thorough and comprehensive than the work last-named is

⁶ Vide *The Vedic Age* pp. 267-68, 304-11 (historical value of *Purāṇa* traditional history), pp. 268-70 (Purāṇic chronology of kings up to the time of Parikshit,) pp. 270-304 and tables at end of Chap.

XIV (reconstruction of traditional history after the *Purāṇas*, pp. 311-13 (criticism of same), pp. 319-24 (*Purāṇic* genealogy of kings from Parikshit to Bāhradratha dynasty).

that of Dr. Girindra Sekhar Bose entitled *Purāṇapraveśa* ("Introduction to the Purāṇas"), Calcutta 1358 B.S. = A.D. 1950-51). As this is written in the author's own vernacular (Bengali), no apology is needed for stating its contents at some length. It is a work of immense industry giving a detailed survey of the entire Purāṇic genealogical and chronological scheme with a large number of illustrative tables. The author strikes his key-note in the opening pages of his work, where after quoting the well-known definition of a *Purāṇa* after its fivefold content he observes that the *Purāṇas* correspond to history in the modern sense of the term, and are equally based upon scientific methods and principles, that they begin with accounts of creation (corresponding to the Palaeolithic and Neolithic Ages of historians of our own times) as well as dissolution of the world along with narratives and chronologies of kings, and lastly, that they are very old compositions which were compiled by different authors and revised by successive editors out of the original sources supplied by the bards (*sūtas*) from the accounts of royal court-historians (*māgadhas*), their language being gradually modernised at each successive redaction. The authenticity of the *Purāṇas*, we are told in another context, is proved by both internal and external evidence, the former being based on the fact that the authors of the *Purāṇas* are committed to the record of true facts, that they were free from bias, and that their writings if judged by the appropriate tests are found to be quite realistic, and the latter resting on corroboration of the Purāṇic accounts by other Indian (Buddhist, Jaina and classical Sanskrit) works as well as foreign authorities. It is, however, admitted that the *Purāṇas* are not free from errors such as those arising from confusion of same names of different kings or of different surnames of the same king, while they frequently record side by side different versions of the same account such as were handed down by the older authorities. The most original contribution of the author consists in his elucidation of the highly complex scheme of *Purāṇa* chronology and his reckoning (in terms of the Christian era) of the reigns of individual kings, the whole list of kings belonging to the parallel or successive dynasties being arranged serially in the order of their genealogical succession. Among the Purāṇic methods of time-reckoning explained by the author are included, firstly, a *kalpa*-cycle of 5000 years divided into 14 Manu-cycles (one of 359 years and the rest of 357 years each) as well as 4 *yugas* (*Kṛita*, *Tretā*, *Dvāpara* and *Kali* in the proportion of 4 : 3 : 2 : 1); secondly, other *kalpa*-cycles of 5 years as well as of 2000 and 12000 months each; thirdly, the cycle of the Great Bear (*saptarshi*) constellation comprising 100 years. The *Purāṇas*, we are further told, use different methods of time-reckoning for the different dynasties, namely, (a) the Manu-cycle for the reigns from Svāyambhuva to Vaivasvata Manu (b) the *kalpa*-cycle of 5000 years comprising the four *yuga*-groups of the same duration for the period from Vaivasvata Manu to Yudhishṭhira, and (c) the *saptarshi*-cycle of 100 years as well as regnal years for the period from Yudhishṭhira to the Āndhras. In so far as the ancient kings are con-

cerned, the author claims to show by a number of illustrations that the scattered allusions to the chronology of the individual reigns in the *Purāṇas* are strikingly corroborated by calculations based upon their place in the genealogical scheme on an average of 25 years for each generation. Coming to the period of the recent kings the author arranges the chronological data under five heads:—(a) lineal succession of kings and dynasties, (b) and (c) reign-periods of individual kings and whole dynasties, (d) statements of intervals between two kings, and (e) reckoning according to the *saptarshi-cycle*. The first three items, the author explains, give an average for each reign which does not disagree with the average reign-periods of historical dynasties, both Indian and foreign. As regards the fourth item the author shows after an elaborate discussion that the correct Purāṇic figure for the interval between Parikshit's birth and Mahāpadma's accession is 1015 (and not 1050) years. With these explanations the author fixes the chronologies of the ancient kings by taking the date of Mahāpadma's accession (401 B.C. according to his own calculation) as his starting-point and by working backwards on the basis of the place of each king in the genealogical list as well as other relevant Purāṇic data. This gives the dates 401 B.C. + 1015 years = 1416 B.C. for the Bhārata war, 5958 B.C. for the first Manu (Svāyambhuva) and 3814 B.C. for the seventh Manu (Vaivasvata). The chronology of the Ikshvāku kings is traced with the help of a table through 210 generations from Ikshvāku, the reputed son of Vaivasvata (3795 B.C.) down to Sumitra (637 B.C.) with all dates for the intermediate reigns. This is followed by similar tables of the Puru and Bārhadratha dynasties. After this comes a long list of tables of recent kings, namely, the Prādyotas, the Śaiśunāgas, the Nandas, the Mauryas, the Śuṅgas, the Kāṇvas and the Āndhras. It is characteristic of the author's attitude that he implicitly trusts throughout the Purāṇic historical tradition, neglecting to check it at any stage by means of the more authentic Vedic data. Significant of the same attitude is his unquestioned acceptance of the discredited Purāṇic genealogies of the later kings such as the Kosalas with Śākya, Śuddhodana, Rāhula (or Siddhārtha) and Prasenajit ranking in order of lineal succession, and the succession of the Magadha kings with the Prādyota dynasty preceding that of the Śaiśunāgas in which Bimbisāra is said to have been the fifth in lineal succession.⁷

V. 'India in the Vedic Age'

We now come to the latest and the most original work of our times

⁷ Vide *Purāṇapraveśa*, pp. 3-7 (*Purāṇas* as historical works), pp. 206-08 (internal and external evidence for authenticity of *Purāṇas*), pp. 15-17 (errors of *Purāṇas*), pp. 18-46, 79-86, graph on p. 95 (scheme of *Purāṇa* chronology) pp. 50-56, 56-60, table on p. 98 (chro-

nological references to 'ancient kings'), p. 69 (chronological data for 'recent kings'), pp. 57-65 (average year for one generation), pp. 189-97 (interval between Parikshit and Mahāpadma), pp. 100-49 (table of ancient and recent kings).

dealing with the Purāṇic historical traditions, namely, that entitled *India in the Vedic Age* by Dr. P. L. Bhargava (Lucknow, 1956). Premising in the first place that the historical narratives in the later Vedic *Saṁhitās* imply an original *Purāṇa*, the author observes that its popularity led the priests of the different religious sects to multiply the number and contents of the *Purāṇas* and even revise the old tales for their own purposes. When the *Purāṇas* thus passed into the hands of an inferior priestly class, the old authentic accounts were corrupted by them in seven different ways explained and illustrated by the author. Nevertheless, the author thinks, it is not at all difficult to disentangle the matter of the original *Purāṇa* from the later additions. This original Purāṇic layer consisting of the records of the *sūtas* (unlike the later layer comprising the additions and interpolations by the later editors) is held by the author to be in remarkable agreement with the Vedic evidence. He justifies his view by referring to the whole history of Aryan migration and expansion in India. Beginning with the statement that the Aryans entered the Indus Valley under Manu (a curious confusion of an evident culture-hero with a historical figure) because of a high flood in their original home (an unwarranted interpretation of the stories of the Great Flood in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and later works), the author locates the lines of Manu's sons in the Punjab. The Purāṇic location of the dynasties of Manu's two sons, Sudyumna and Ikshvāku at Pratishthāna in the Vatsa territory and in Kośala respectively, it is explained, is due to the mistake of the later editors in placing them in the regions ruled by their descendants. The third son, Prāṁśu, is proved by the indications in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* to have ruled likewise in the Punjab. The location of the fourth son, Śaryāti in Gujarat is due to the fact that the later editors regarded the Śaryāta Haihayas who ruled centuries later in that region as his descendants. The six other sons of Manu Vaivasvata were added by the later editors to bring him into line with other Manus, or else because of their misunderstanding of the patronymic *Mānava* attached to some later kings. The Purāṇic evidence as interpreted above, agreeing with the Vedic data, proves that the Yamuna remained for a long time the eastern limit of the Aryas, that even in the time of Sudāsa the only Aryan kingdom outside the Sapta-Sindhu was Kāśī, that the Haihayas migrated to central and western India only after their defeat by the Aikshvāka king Sagara, that Bhagīratha, founder of the Kośala kingdom, was the first Aikshvāka king to be associated with the Gaṅga, that the Videha kingdom was founded shortly afterwards by a king called Māthava after his patronymic in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and Nimi after his proper name in the *Purāṇas*, that Aṅga and Magadha as well as the separate Kuru and Pañchāla States were the last kingdoms founded by the Āryas in the Vedic period. After proving the authenticity of the Purāṇic genealogies by some further lines of evidence (such as the archaic character of the society implied in the lists as well as the Vedic, Epic and Purāṇic syn-

chronisms), the author divides the history of the Vedic age into four successive periods, viz., the eras of *Saptasindhu* and conquest (comprising the period of the *Rigveda*) and those of expansion and settlement (corresponding to the period of the later Vedas). The author's chronology of the Vedic period follows the usual conventional lines. Taking his stand on the Purāṇic data of 1050 years between the birth of Parikshit (identified by him with the first instead of the second king of that name) and the accession of Mahāpadma Nanda, and allowing 40 years (after the *Vāyu Purāṇa*) for the duration of the Nanda dynasty, and fixing 320 B.C. as the date of Chandragupta Maurya's accession he concludes that the date of Parikshit's birth was $1050 + 40 + 320$ B.C. i.e. 1410 B.C., and that of his accession was probably 1380 B.C. The author's date for the first Aryan migration on a reckoning of 81 generations of kings between Manu Vaivasvata's sons and Parikshit I with an average of 20 years for each reign is $81 \times 20 = 1620 + 1380$ B.C., i.e., 3000 B.C., while his date for the Bhārata War on a similar reckoning of 32 generation of kings preceding Mahāpadma Nanda is $32 \times 20 = 640 + 360$ B.C. i.e. 1000 B.C. This fixes the duration of the Vedic age at about 2000 years (3000-1000 B.C.). The author sums up the results of his elaborate discussions in a historical sketch of the course of the Aryan migration and settlement in India during the Vedic age.⁸

Critical estimate

Let us conclude this chapter with a critical estimate of the *Purāṇa* historical traditions in the light of the recent intensive studies on this subject as stated above. These studies, as we have seen, confine themselves more or less to the preparation of a skeleton outline of the royal genealogies for larger or for smaller periods with accompanying chronological data (Pradhan, Raychaudhuri and Bose), or else they extend to a connected account of the history of Aryan migration and expansion in its successive stages (Pusalker and Bhargava). We may remark at the outset that the attitude which looks upon the Purāṇas as historical works with an authenticity proved by both internal and external evidence (Bose) stands self-condemned. On the other hand the scholars (Pradhan, Raychaudhuri, Pusalker) who have maintained a critical attitude towards the Purāṇic accounts as needing correction or adjustment in the light of the more authentic data from the Vedas as well as the Buddhist and Jaina works appear to have followed sound principles. How even the *varṇśa* lists of Vedic teachers and the Vedic *gotra-pravara* lists in the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Āraṇyakas* got confused in the *Upanishads* has been sought

⁸ Vide, *India and the Vedic Age*, Ch. ii. (original *Purāṇa* and its corruptions) Ch. iv and tables (Purāṇic genealogies), Ch. v (agreement of Vedic and Purāṇic traditions), Chs. v-vi (evidence of

authenticity of Purāṇic genealogies), Ch. vii (periods of the Vedic Age), Ch. ix (chronology of the Vedic Age), Ch. x (history of the Vedic Age).

to be shown in another place (Above, Chap. I). It is again remarkable that the attempt made by one scholar (Pusalker) to reconstruct the ancient history of the Indo-Aryans on the Purāṇic lines has led him to an open admission of the conflict between the Purāṇic version and the authentic Vedic evidence. A new and important development may be traced in the thought of the last-named author (Bhargava), who has plausibly sought to demonstrate for the Vedic Age a complete agreement between the original Purāṇic material (as distinguished from the accretions by the later editors) and the Vedic data, and has thus presented on the basis of the Purāṇic lists what appears to be a well-authenticated account of the course of Aryan migration and expansion in this country. While the Purāṇic genealogies assignable to the Vedic period would thus appear to be vindicated by the results of the latest research, the defects of the post-Vedic genealogies have been sufficiently proved by the intensive studies of the other scholars (Pradhan, Pusalker and especially Raychaudhuri) noticed above. In so far as the chronology of the oldest Purāṇic genealogies is concerned, the views of our authors based as they are upon a few datum lines and the averages of reign-periods of kings must be held to be largely subjective in character, for while some of the authors (Pradhan and Raychaudhuri) agree in rejecting the interval between Parikshit and Mahāpadma Nanda after the Purāṇic tradition, others (Pusalker, Bose and Bhargava) have made it the basis of their calculations. The scholars again differ widely in their estimate of the average reign-periods of kings which have been held to be 18 years (Pusalker), 20 years (Bhargava), 25 years (Bose), and 28 years (Pradhan), not to speak of the average of 30 years for a spiritual generation (Raychaudhuri). To the above we have to add that the alleged extreme antiquity of the beginnings of the Indo-Aryans, namely, 3000 B.C. (Bhargava), 3100 B.C. (Pusalker), 3795 B.C. (Pradhan) and 3814 (Bose) is as yet unsupported by the evidence of written records in or outside the country, such as those which have helped to demonstrate the high antiquity of the civilisations of Babylon and Egypt.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHRONICLE OF KING HARSHA (*Harshacharita*)

By Bāṇa.*

Literary prototypes of Harshacharita and its position in the history of Sanskrit literature.

The *Harshacharita* was written by Bāṇa, the great master of Sanskrit prose, in praise of his patron King Harsha of Thanesar (c. A.D. 606-648). The author introduces his work to his readers under the title of *ākhyāyikā*, while his other great work the *kādambarī* is similarly introduced with the title of *kathā*. These titles are justified by the definition of the Sanskrit rhetoricians which is reproduced in the standard lexicon of Amara. According to this definition *ākhyāyika* and *kathā* signify a composition dealing with historical facts and a work of imagination respectively. As a distinct class of compositions *ākhyāyikā* is first mentioned by *Kātyāyana*, author of the gloss (*vārttikas*) on Pāṇini's grammar, who appears to have flourished in the fourth century B.C. In his famous commentary (*Mahābhāṣya*) on Pāṇini, Patañjali, who lived about the middle of the second century B.C., quotes three *ākhyāyikās* by name, namely the *Vāsavadattā*, the *Sumanottarā* and the *Bhaimarathī* while he refers likewise to one who knew or studied the two first-named works. It may safely be presumed that these works in accordance, with the definitions quoted above, were written in prose and were concerned with historical personages. To the same category of *ākhyāyikās* may be assigned the prose composition of the revered Harichandra, which is eulogised by Bāṇa in one of the introductory verses of the *Harshacharita*. All these works have perished without leaving a trace. On the other hand the composition of *ākhyāyikās* appears to have gone out of fashion after Bāṇa's time, for we have no work of this class of a later date than the *Harshacharita*. From the point of view of its literary form, then,

*The quotations and references from the *Harshacharita* in this chapter are given for the sake of convenience in the standard English version of Cowell and Thomas, London, 1897 (abbreviated as CT), which has been revised and brought up to date in the light of the explanatory notes of P. V. Kane, *Harshacharita*, ed. Bombay, 1918 (abbr. as K.) and of S.D. and A.B. Gajendragadkar, *ibid*, 2 vols., Poona 1919 (abbr. as G.) and specially and above all of Dr. V.S. Agrawala in his critical study of *Harshacharita* (in Hindi), Patna

1953 (abbr. as A.). This last is a fundamental work as it explains and illustrates Bāṇa's references to contemporary manners and customs as well as art and architecture in the light of other literary as well as archaeological data with the addition of no less than 27 plates and numerous figures. The references in Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* and the *Vāsavadattā* of Subandhu given in this chapter are quoted from the editions of P. L. Vaidya and FitzEdward Hall respectively.

the *Harshacharita* occupies a unique position in our historical literature.¹

From another point of view Bāṇa's work may be regarded as the forerunner of a new class of compositions. The *Harshacharita* is for aught that we know the earliest extant chronicle, written in the artificial *kāvya* style, of a contemporary monarch. The celebration of the praises of contemporary kings composed with rhetorical embellishments and long compounds characteristic of this style of composition may indeed be traced back to the historical inscriptions of the early centuries of the Christian era.² But these are essentially short records having no claim to rank as literary works. It was apparently Bāṇa's keen desire to make his mark in literature that induced him to undertake his bold experiment. In the introductory verses of the *Harshacharita* the author, after expressing his utmost contempt for poetasters and plagiarists and criticising the distinctive features of the poetry of the North, the West, the South and the East (Gauḍa), writes as follows:—"A new subject, a diction not too homely, unlaboured double meanings, the sentiment easily understood, the language rich in sonorous words—all these it is difficult to combine in one composition."³ Guided by such literary canons, Bāṇa took for his theme the biography of his great contemporary king and patron Harsha. He thus became for all practical purposes the creator of a new literary *genre* which found many imitators among his successors.

Plan of the Harshacharita

It will appear from the above that Bāṇa showed marked boldness in basing the theme of his work upon the precedent of the historical inscriptions in praise of kings. Equal adroitness was shown by him in adopting the *Purāṇa* model for the plan of his composition. The narratives of the *Purāṇas* are presented, as is well known, in the form of replies of a minstrel (*sūta*) or of a sage to the queries addressed by other sages in the *Naimisha* forest. In the *Harshacharita* similarly Bāṇa narrates his hero's life and achievements to his kinsmen assembled in his village home in reply to their repeated requests to hear the story of Harsha, a

¹ Difference between *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā* (*Amarakośa*, s. v. and Rudraṭa's *Kāvya-lamkāra* XVI 20-30). The *Harshacharita* is described as an *ākhyāyikā* (*ibid* introductory verse 19). and the *Kādambarī* as a *kathā* (*ibid* introductory verse 20). Early refs:—(a) *Taitt. Ār.* I. 63 (*ākhyāyikā*); (b) *CU.* I. 8. 1 (*kathā*); (c) Kātyāyana on Pāṇini IV. 2. 60 (*ākhyāyikā*); (d) Patañjali in *Mahābhāṣya*, Kielhorn's ed. Vol. II, pp. 284, 313 (3 *ākhyāyikā* works). The story of Vāsavadattā, princess of Avanti and afterwards queen of Udayana, king of the Vatasas, is well known in Buddhist as well as in Brahmanical

literature. For the story of Sumana, a wealthy merchant of Rājagriha and his wife Uttarā, vide *Poona Orientalist*, Vol. VII, pp. 197-200.

² Vide Junagadh rock inscr. of Maḥākshatrapa Rudradāman, Nasik cave inscr. of Pulumāyi, Hātigumphā cave inscr. of Khāravela, and Allahabad pillar inscr. of Samudragupta. The illustrations of the theory of poetics in these inscriptions are conveniently summarised in the work, *History of Sanskrit Poetics* (pp. 325-23) by Dr. P. V. Kane.

³ CT p. 2.

second *Mahābhārata*. That the *Purāṇa* model was consciously followed by the author may further be inferred from his vivid description of the train of events which made him launch upon his literary project. Bāṇa tells us how after his return home from Harsha's court he was spending his days happily among his kinsmen. One afternoon, when the reader Sudrishi was regaling the assembled kinsmen with his melodious chant of the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, the minstrel Sūchibāṇa accompanied the modulation of the chant by reciting an *Āryā* couplet to the effect that the *Vāyu Purāṇa* in no way differed from the achievements of King Harsha. At this pointed suggestion Bāṇa's four cousins looked meaningfully at each other. At last the youngest and the most beloved of them all made bold to ask Bāṇa to tell the full story of the king. To this appeal Bāṇa responded after a show of reluctance caused by the contrast between the greatness of his theme and his own modest capacities.⁴

The above detailed account of the circumstances leading to the composition of the *Harshacharita* is given in the course of the author's narrative of his own ancestry and early career. It therefore follows that Bāṇa's biography of the king is presented before us in the setting of his autobiography. In the *Gauḍavaho*, the *Navasāhasāṅkacharita*, the *Vikramāṅkacharita* and the *Rāmacharita* of later times the poet-chroniclers added sketches of their careers to their works independently either by way of prefatory notice or else of a supplement. Bāṇa's bold and unique plan ensured for his work a unity of design which was not achieved by his successors.

Bāṇa's ancestry and early life and their influence

The detailed account of his ancestry and early life to which Bāṇa devotes the first chapter of his chronicle (aptly called 'Description of the Vātsyāyana clan') concerns us only in so far as it helps our estimation of the influences bearing upon his literary work. With the evident object of exalting his own pedigree Bāṇa provides for us in the true style of Epic and Purāṇic tradition, a romantic story of the origin of Sārasvata, the cousin and teacher of Vatsa, his own eponymous ancestor. Sārasvata, we are told, was the son of the divine Sarasvatī (condemned by a sage's curse to descend from heaven to earth) by Prince Dadhicha, son of Princess Sukanyā by the sage Chyavana. Immediately after Sārasvata's birth his mother returned to heaven at the conclusion of her curse, while the disconsolate father retired to the forest after leaving the infant in charge of Akshamālā, wife of his Brāhmaṇa cousin belonging to the Bhṛigu lineage. The lady Akshamālā had borne a son Vatsa at the very moment when Sarasvatī gave birth to her own child. Sārasvata, who through his mother's blessing was at the very start of youth gifted with the full treasure of the sciences, conveyed the same undiminished to his loving consin Vatsa. When Vatsa took a wife, Sārasvata built for him

⁴ Story of Bāṇa's undertaking the biography of Harsha

(CT pp. 71-7).

a home called *Prītikūṭa* and himself retired to the forest to join his father. After this eulogy of Vatsa, Bāṇa gives a highly flattering account of the Vātsyāyana clan of Brāhmaṇas claiming descent from that sage. This is followed by the author's eulogy of four generations of his ancestors with which may be compared the similar praise of three of them in the introductory verses (x-xix) of the *Kādambarī*. These eulogies amount to the statement that they were all great teachers and diligent sacrificers, thus fulfilling two of the main duties of a Brāhmaṇa householder after the *Smṛiti* standards.⁵

Bāṇa's early life, as described by him at the close of the first chapter of his chronicle, was sufficiently chequered. Having had the misfortune to lose his mother while still a child, he was brought up with tender care by his father, who acted for him "a mother's part". Bāṇa's precocity was remarkable; for he claims to have finished his studies while still below fourteen years of age. Among his teachers the most distinguished seems to have been a certain Bharvu, who is singled out for salutation in the *Kādambarī* and whose lotus feet are said to have been worshipped by two kings of the Maukhari line. No sooner had he returned home after completion of his studies than he had the fresh misfortune of losing his father by untimely death. When his first outburst of grief for his father's loss was over, the author tells us with remarkable *naïveté*, he was led by his newly acquired independence as well as the impetuosity and unsteadiness of youth to abandon himself to a sort of Bohemian life. Gathering a motley throng of boon companions of his own age, he wandered from his home, "despite the wealth sufficient for a Brāhmaṇa amassed by his ancestors" and "despite his hitherto uninterrupted pursuit of knowledge". His self-willed action in wasting his valuable time in these wanderings, the author writes with a confession of shame, made him the butt of ridicule of the great. That Bāṇa's self-reproach was quite sincere is proved by a later reference in his work. At his first audience of king Harsha when he was told that he was 'a great gallant', the author admitted that his youth was not without some slight follies for which he felt repentance.

But this wild episode of the author's career was necessarily brief. Concluding the *naïve* confession of his faults to which reference has been made above, Bāṇa states that he gradually regained the sage attitude of mind customary among his race by his contact with great courts, schools and assemblies. No wonder then that when he returned home after many years, he was welcomed like a feast-day by his kinsmen in whose company he enjoyed almost a bliss of liberation. In some later passages of

⁵ Story of Bāṇa's ancestry (CT pp. 4-32) *Bhrātṛi* applied by the author to describe the relationship of Dadhīcha to the father of Vatsa is better translated as 'cousin' (K. Notes I pp. 82-83) than interpreted as a proper name, or as a foster-brother (CT p. 267). Though

the story of Sārasvata's birth from Dadhīcha by Sarasvatī is known to Epic and Purāṇic tradition, Bāṇa's version of Sārasvata's relationship with Vatsa does not appear to be traceable elsewhere.

his work he makes affectionate references to two of his kinsmen. His brother Jagatpati, we are told, was one who was just like his own heart, while his young cousin Śyāmala was one much loved by Bāṇa and disposer almost of his soul. It was probably after his return home that Bāṇa married and settled down to a happy house-holder's life to which he referred in his speech to Harsha at his first audience of that king.⁶

It was during the happy period of his stay at home that there occurred the incident which gives its title ('Visit to the King') to Chapter II of the *Harshacharita*. One day during a terribly hot season Bāṇa found a messenger from his disinterested friend and patron Prince Kṛishṇa waiting at the door. The message after stating how Kṛishṇa had used his good offices to disabuse Harsha's mind of prejudices against Bāṇa, ended with a pressing invitation to him for attending the royal court. With some misgivings Bāṇa decided to accept the friendly invitation. Reaching the king's camp and admiring all its pomp and grandeur, he was received at first with a certain amount of coldness. In a short time, however, he gained the king's favour and was richly rewarded with wealth and honours.⁷

Such being the recorded incidents of the author's early career we may attempt here an estimate of their influence in moulding his literary work. Descended from a long line of ancestors distinguished for their learning and pious observances, gifted with a precocious intellect, and trained by a renowned teacher in his boyhood, Bāṇa could not but encompass the wide circle of Brahmanical learning. At his first audience of Harsha referred to above, the author, while defending himself from the king's charge of being 'a great gallant', observed that he had thoroughly mastered the Veda with its six *aṅgas* and had as far as possible heard lectures on the *śāstras*. Indeed the *Harshacharita* like the *Kādambarī* bears ample evidence of the author's intimate knowledge of the different branches of the Brahmanical learning. Bāṇa's special *forte* seems to have consisted in his liking for Sanskrit and Prākṛit compositions in the artificial style of the *kāvya*s (belles-lettres). In the introductory verses of the *Harshacharita* he mentions with high respect the author of the *Vāsavadattā*, the prose-author Harichandra, the lyric poet Sātavāhana (Hāla), the epic poet Pravarasena, the dramatists Bhāsa and Kalidāsa,

⁶ Vide CT pp. 32-34 (Bāṇa's early life), p. 66 (his apologia), pp. 46, 74 (refs. to Jagatpati and Śyāmala). The companions whom Bāṇa mentions by name (CT pp. 32-33) were drawn from the most varied occupations of life and belonged to both sexes. The list (classified under nine heads by A. pp. 28-30) comprised a couple of Bāṇa's brothers by a Śūdra mother, a vernacular poet, a young noble who was the author of a Prākṛit poem, a couple of panegyrists, an elderly ascetic widow, a snake-doctor, a betel-bearer, a young physi-

cian, a reader, a goldsmith, a jeweller, a scribe, a painter, a modeller, a drummer, a couple of singers, a maid, a couple of pipers, a music teacher, a female shampooer, a young dancer, a dicer, a gambler, a young actor, a dancing girl, an ascetic who had studied the *sūtra* of Parāśara, a Jaina monk, a story-teller, a Śivite devotee, a magician, a treasure-seeker, an alchemist, a potter, a juggler and an ascetic in the fourth stage of life.

⁷ CT p. 40f.

the writer of the *Brihatkathā* and an unknown author called Āḍhyarāja.⁸ These must have served Bāṇa as his literary models in writing his two works. Further it would appear that the wild episode of Bāṇa's early youth which he mentions more than once with a confession of shame enabled him to supplement his book-learning with those minute and accurate descriptions of scenes and characters which lend such a charm of originality to his work. Though he led afterwards a happy domestic life in the enjoyment of an ample patrimony, the memory of the misfortunes of his early career probably made him highly susceptible to that sentiment of pathos which is so powerfully expressed more than once in his historical descriptions. On the other hand his noble and affectionate nature which is reflected in the story of his repentance for his early follies and that of his relations with his kinsmen apparently led him to enter with unusual zeal into the sentiments of love and hatred of his large-hearted and generous royal patron.

Combination of conventionalism and realism in Harshacharita

The chronicle of King Harsha such as Bāṇa has left it to us is an imperfect *torso*. Beginning with Harsha's remote ancestor Pushpabhūti the author deals successively with his hero's parentage, birth and early life, breaking off abruptly in the midst of the king's campaign against the ruler of Gauḍa, the slayer of his dearly beloved brother. Within these limits, Bāṇa's work reveals the weakness as well as the strength of his genius. As the heir of a well-established literary tradition which was applied to historical characters as far back as the first century of the Christian era or even earlier, the author could not but indulge in conventional descriptions of the scenes and characters forming the subject-matter of his work. With the burden of this literary inheritance, however, Bāṇa unites an original gift of accurate and minute observation which, as we have suggested above, he owed to his varied experiences during the wild episode of his early career. The result may be traced in his brilliant series of historical portraits which are in the main derived from living types and which not unoften evidently represent actual historical figures. In truth Bāṇa's wonderful realism lights up not only his descriptions of the physique, toilette and equipment of his characters, but also paints very successfully the outward expression of their violent changes of emotion. What is more, his detailed narrative of events

⁸ In the above list Kālidāsa and the author of the *Brihatkathā* (Guṇāḍhya) are of course well-known names in the history of Sanskrit literature, while Sātavahana, Bhāsa and Pravarasena are generally identified with the authors of the *Gāthāsaptasatī*, the recently discovered set of Trivandrum plays, and the *Setubandha* epic respectively. The author of the *Vāsavadattā* is identified

by some (Dr. P. V. Kane and Dr. V. S. Agrawala) with Subandhu, but others such as G. (Introduction pp. xviii-xxv) with better reason reject this view. Harichandra and Āḍhyarāja are enigmatical names which have been identified or explained in different ways (vide K. and G. s.v.; A. pp. 6-8, cf. Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 316.)

frequently brings to light very realistic traits in the character of the actors on his historical stage supplementing his more conventional accounts of the same. Like his descriptions of historical personages Bāṇa's pictures of historical and natural scenes are frequently drawn with such vividness as to suggest his personal reminiscence of the same. The same realism extends even to Bāṇa's descriptions of the habits of animals, specially of the horse and the elephant. The *Harshacharita* in fact with all its limitations gives us perhaps a more complete and accurate picture of contemporary life and manners during a single period than any other royal or dynastic chronicle in our ancient literature, not excepting the Kashmir chronicle of Kalhaṇa.⁹

Outline of contents of Harshacharita

Before proceeding to illustrate the above remarks with quotations of extracts from Bāṇa's biography of Harsha, we may give a short outline of its contents. The author, to begin with, is completely silent about the origin and social status of his hero's family. This omission which is in striking contrast with the ample and picturesque accounts of dynastic origins in such later chronicles as the *Vikramāṅkacharita*, the *Nava-sāhasāṅkacharita* and the *Prithvīrāvijaya*, was probably international. The contemporary Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang describes Harsha as belonging to the Vaiśya caste. Indirect evidence of the humble origin of Harsha's line is furnished by the absence of any eulogistic references thereto in the king's own inscriptions. Bāṇa, again, is significantly silent about the performance of sacraments prescribed for the higher castes on the part of members of his hero's family.

The first historical or semi-historical incident mentioned by Bāṇa in his chronicle is concerned with a romantic episode in the career of Harsha's remote ancestor Pushpabhūti. In Chapter III (significantly called 'The exposition of the king's ancestry') Bāṇa tells us in great detail how Puspabhūti, a most devout Śaiva, welcomed to his court a renowned Śaiva saint from the Deccan called Bhairavāchārya. The king, having helped the saint with conspicuous gallantry and magnanimity in the completion of his dread rite, was granted a boon by the goddess Lakshmi in the following terms, "Because of this magnanimity of thine and of thy superlative devotion to the holy lord Śiva, thou shalt be the founder of a mighty line of kings....wherein shall arise an Emperor named Harsha, governor like Harishchandra of all the continents, world-conquering like a second Māndhātṛi". The above account was probably derived from a genuine tradition current in the royal house of Thanesar about the meeting of Harsha's renowned Śaiva ancestor with an equally famous Śivite ascetic. But the miracles attending the completion of the

⁹ It is characteristic of Bāṇa's genius that highly realistic descriptions of contemporary life in court and camp,

in city and forest, are found even in his admittedly imaginative work, the *Kādambari*.

ascetic's rite such as the apparition of the tutelary Nāga deity and that of the goddess Lakshmi, which are stories of the folklore type, were evidently later inventions. Again the remarkable prophecy just mentioned which is put into the mouth of goddess Lakshmi was doubtless invented after Harsha's rise to imperial greatness.

Passing over the intermediate reigns with only general compliments Bāṇa introduces us in the following chapter (Chap. IV called "The Exposition of the Emperor's birth") to Harsha's parentage and birth. The author's studious neglect extending even to the omission of names of the intermediate kings is amply justified by other contemporary evidence. In Harsha's inscriptions four generations of his ancestors are mentioned by name. But the first three are simply called by the title of *Mahārāja* signifying in contemporary parlance a feudatory prince and nothing more. Hiuen Tsang, again, is completely silent about the names and achievements of these older kings. With Prabhākaravardhana, Harsha's father, who is the first of his line to be given the imperial title in the king's inscriptions, the dynasty entered upon a career of greatness. With his characteristic indifference to affairs of statecraft Bāṇa makes but the vaguest and the most general references to his king's victorious wars and conquests which must have contributed to his rise to power. The author prefers instead to give us picturesque details connected with the birth of the two princes Rājyavardhana and Harsha as well as of the princess Rājyaśrī. One hot season, we read, when the night was nearly spent, Queen Yaśovati sleeping on the palace roof saw in a dream two shining youths issue from the sun's disc. They wore crowns, ear-rings, armlets, and cuirasses. All the world bowed before them with upturned faces. Accompanied by one maid who looked like the moon issuing from the *sushumṇā* ray (of the Sun), they lighted upon the earth. While the Queen screamed out of fright, they cut open her womb and essayed to enter. This dream, interpreted by the king to mean that the sun-god was going to bless them with three children, found its fulfilment when the two princes and their sister were born in succession to the Queen. Of the above tale as of the prophecy of the goddess Lakshmi just mentioned it may be properly said that this was fabricated after the event by some courtly panegyrist.

While Bāṇa with his characteristic indifference to chronology is completely silent about the birth-dates of Harsha's elder brother and younger sister, he makes an exception in favour of his hero. As the author tells us, Harsha was conceived in his mother's womb "like Kṛishṇa in the womb of Devakī" in the month of Nabhas (i.e. Śrāvaṇa). "He was born in the month of Jyāishṭha, on the twelfth day of the dark fortnight, the Pleiads being in the ascendant, just after the twilight time, when the young night had begun to climb." The object of introducing these astronomical details is made evident in the following lines. Here we are told that the court-astrologer declared to the king that on such a day free from the taint of all conjunctions and at such a moment when all the

planets were at their apexes was born Māndhātā of Purāṇic fame, and since his time no one in the whole world had been born at a conjunction so fit for a universal emperor's birth.

Passing to the incidents of Harsha's childhood, Bāṇa introduces us to the boy Bhaṇḍi whom his father (who was Queen Yaśovati's brother) presented at court for serving the little princes. When Rājyavardhana and Harsha grew into early manhood, the king himself appointed as their lords-in-waiting two noble youths of tried virtue viz. Kumāragupta and Mādhavagupta, who were sons of the Malwa king. Bāṇa, however, makes but the vaguest reference to the training of the princes, mentioning in one place their daily exercise in sword-play and their practice of archery at recreation-time. We have, again, no incident or anecdote of this period presaging the future greatness of the princes. The period of the princes' youth closes in Bāṇa's work with the marriage of their sister to Grahavarman of the Maukhari dynasty.

The scene now shifts to Prabhākaravardhana's fatal illness and death to which Bāṇa devotes a whole chapter (Chap. V called 'The Death of the Great King') of his work. Just prior to this catastrophe the elder prince had been sent by his father on a campaign against the Hūṇas, of which, however, Bāṇa has not cared to give us any detail. With the same indifference to political affairs the author fails to indicate the formidable preparations of the Malwa king who, as we learn from the sequel, on the very day of Prabhākaravardhana's death killed the Maukhari king and threatened Thaneswar itself with an invasion.

In the following chapter (Chap. VI entitled 'The King'), Bāṇa first describes the dramatic incidents following upon Rājyavardhana's return to the capital. The prince was at first so carried away by the impetuosity of his grief for his departed sire that he resolved on retirement to a hermitage. But this determination gave way to a stern resolve to destroy the royal house of Malwa, as soon as the prince heard of the murder of his brother-in-law by the king of that region. Rājyavardhana's easy victory over the Malwa king was followed (according to the perhaps biased testimony of the author) by his treacherous murder at the hands of the king of Gauḍa. Bāṇa, however, leaves us completely in the dark about the incidents of the prince's campaign and his fatal interview with the king of Gauḍa. The news of his brother's murder roused Harsha to make his famous vow (which gives the title to the present chapter) for the destruction of the Gauḍas. Simultaneously he formed his plans for universal conquest. In both particulars the author's statement is confirmed by that of Hiuen Tsang to the effect that as soon as Śīlāditya (Harsha) became the ruler, he got together a great army and set out to avenge his brother's murder, and to reduce the neighbouring countries to submission.

The following chapter (Chap. VII) describes what the author calls Harsha's march for universal conquest. Two dramatic incidents of this march, viz. Harsha's reception of an envoy from the king of Prāgjyotiṣa with the offer of an imperishable alliance and his meeting with Bhaṇḍi,

who brought back the spoils of Rājyavardhana's Malwa campaign, are recorded by the author with his usual vividness. But he characteristically gives us no indication of the route of Bhaṇḍi's march. The title of the chapter is derived from a most wonderful umbrella presented by the ambassador of the Eastern king. The chapter ends with Harsha's hurried departure for the Vindhya forest in search of his lost sister.

Harsha's happy recovery of his sister just as she was about to mount the funeral pyre and his return to camp in her company form the subject matter of the eighth and concluding chapter. The abrupt break of Bāṇa's narrative at this point unhappily leaves us in the dark about the issue of Harsha's eastern campaign.

Historical portraits in Bāṇa's chronicle

In the wide range of his portraits of historical personages Bāṇas, as we have observed above, is unrivalled by any of his compeers in our ancient literature. We have in the *Harshacharita* living pictures of persons of the most varied social types from bejewelled kings, queens and princes to bark-clad ascetics and from polished courtiers to wild foresters. We may begin with Bāṇa's charming pen-picture of the child-prince Harsha when he could just manage five or six paces with the support of his nurse's finger and could just utter a child's first indistinct cries. Illustrative of the superstition reigning even in high places at this time is the reference to the precautions taken to ward off from the precious child the evil eye and the evil spirits. The Prince had mustard seed placed upon his head as an amulet, his body was stained yellow with the pigment called *gorochanā*, his neck was ornamented with a row of tiger's claws linked with gold. Equally graphic is the picture of the boy Bhaṇḍi, whom his father, as already mentioned, presented to court at this time for serving the little princes. The boy's coiffure, his ornaments and his carriage equally bespoke his high rank. Sidelocks of curly hair in waving tufts adorned his handsome head. He wore one ear-ring of sapphire and another ear-ornament adorned with pearls. A diamond bracelet was bound around his forearm. Curved bits of coral were tied to his neck-string. Though still a child he bore himself stiffly like a seed of the tree of valour.

Equally striking but more detailed is the picture of the two youthful Malwa princes Kumāragupta and Mādhavagupta as they appeared when King Prabhākaravardhana introduced them to his two sons to serve as lords-in-waiting. The elder Prince who was aged about eighteen years had a striking physique. He was neither very tall nor very short and was possessed of a hard frame with slim shanks, thick hard thighs, a slender waist, a broad chest and pendulous arms. His decorations befitting his high rank consisted of a jewelled bracelet on his left wrist and a jewelled ear-ornament. His bearing was marked by graceful motions, downcast eyes and princely nobility. The younger brother had his breast anointed

with pure sandal-paste and adorned with a circular necklace. He was as remarkable as his brother for his decorum, prowess and other qualities.

It was not, however, always amidst such happy surroundings that Bāṇa had occasion to describe royalty. Here is for instance a pathetic picture of Queen Yaśovati as she issued forth from her apartments on her fatal journey to the funeral pyre. She was dressed in vestments of death. Her body was wet from the recent bath. She was wearing two robes reddish brown with saffron as well as a red veil. Her lower limb was tinged with the deep red of betel. A red neck-cord hung between her breasts. Her necklace was drawn aside by her pointed ear-rings. Her limbs were red with moist saffron paste. A garland of strung flowers hung round her neck and reached her feet. She held fast to her bosom the spearhaft of her husband. She was supported by aged women, attended by great noblemen and followed by aged chamberlains. She was bidding farewell even to birds and beasts and embracing the very trees about the palace.

Coming to the great officers of State we may first mention Bāṇa's striking description drawn no doubt from life, of General Simhanāda as he appeared when addressing Harsha in the council-chamber about the coming campaign against the Gaudas. Stately and tall, stubborn in frame with straight white locks and hanging eye-brows, with a terrible visage brightened by a thick white moustache, with a long white beard hanging down to his navel, the general bore the weight of his advanced years with ease. A veteran of many wars he wore on his broad chest the scars of numerous wounds received in battle. His very voice deep as the booming of a drum inspired the warriors with thirst for battle.

In the same context Bāṇa gives an equally vivid description of the elephant-commander Skandagupta, evidently of a lower rank than the above, whom Harsha summoned to his presence for getting the elephants ready for the coming campaign. When the king's summons came, he was surrounded by various groups of people employed in the capture, tending and training of elephants. These groups comprised elephant-doctors, people carrying tall bamboos bedecked with peacocks' feathers, elephant-riders displaying green fodder, superintendents of decoys, rows of forest-guards, crowds of *mahouts* displaying leathern figures for the training of elephants for fight, messengers sent by rangers of elephant-forest and so forth. With his stout arms hanging down to his knees, his full and pendulous lower lip, his long nose, his soft and large eyes, his full and broad forehead, his profuse curly dark hair, Skandagupta must have presented a striking appearance. Beneath an aspect of indifference he enjoyed an air of command due as much to his own unbending rigidity as to his master's favour.

Another picture of a courtier in lower life is presented before us in the person of the chief door-keeper Pāriyātra, who introduced Bāṇa into the king's presence at the first audience. He was a tall, fair, broad-chested and narrow-waisted man. He wore a white turban and a clean

jacket. As the insignia of his office he grasped in his left hand a sword with the handle thickly studded with pearls and in the right hand his burnished golden staff of office. The richness of his ornaments corresponded to the importance of his office. His waist was bound by a golden girdle which was furnished with a central piece studded with rubies. He carried on his breast a necklace of pearls, and he wore two jewelled ear-rings.

In so far as Bāṇa's pictures of ascetics and saints are concerned, we may begin with his remarkable sketch of Bhairavāchārya as he looked when visited by King Pushpabhūti one early morning in his hermitage. Punctilious in his observance of his daily ritual he had thus early bathed, presented his garland of eight flowers and offered his oblations to the sacred fire. His seat was ceremonially pure. He was seated on a tiger-skin on ground smeared with cow-dung, and bounded by a line of ashes. His appearance was sufficiently impressive. He was just past fifty-five years of age, and a few white hairs had appeared on his head. The hair line of his skull was giving way to baldness. A natural frown connected his eye-brows. He had very long eyes, a curved nose, narrow cheeks, prominent teeth, hanging lips and tender-soled feet. His chest was covered with very thick dark hair. His dress and toilette were in keeping with the requirements of his sectarian ritual. He was wrapped in a dark woollen garment in keeping with the colour approved in the Śivite ritualistic works. His hair was tied upwards in a lump and a garland of rosary beads and conch-shells hung down from a portion of his matted hair. His forehead was marked with a line of white ashes, a pair of crystal ear-rings dangled from his pendulous ears. He wore a bit of conch-shell on one fore-arm which had an iron bracelet and was bound with a magic thread with various herbs. In his right hand he shook his rosary. Circling round him was an ascetic's wrap of white hue. He had at his side a bamboo staff with a barb of iron inserted at the end.

Partaking of characteristics similar to the above is Bāṇa's striking picture of Bhairavāchārya's disciple Ṭiṭibha as he looked when he was presented to the king with a message from his master. His physical appearance was sufficiently distinctive. He was a tall fellow with arms reaching down to his knees. Though emaciated by living on alms he appeared to be fat on account of the stoutness of his bones. His head was broad, his forehead undulating with deep wrinkles, his eyes were round and ruddy, his nose was slightly curved. One ear was very pendulous. The rows of his teeth were prominent, his lip was loose, his jaw was elongated by a hanging chin. His dress and toilette were in keeping with his status. A red ascetic's scarf hung from his shoulder, his upper robe consisted of a tattered cloth knotted in the middle of his chest and stained with red chalk. His right hand grasped a bamboo stool, while his left hand held a yokepole (?) resting on his shoulder to which were attached his sieve of bamboo-bark, his loin-cloth, his almsbowl, his waterpot, his slippers and a bundle of manuscripts.

In striking contrast with Bāṇa's description of Bhairavāchārya given above, is his sketch of the Buddhist teacher Divākaramitra as seen by Harsha in his hermitage in the Vindhya forest. The contrast reflects the difference between the cold hard formalism of Śivite sectarianism and the Buddhist spirit of universal friendliness. Divākaramitra, as we learn from the context, had been a leading Brāhmaṇa teacher before he abandoned the Vedas for Buddhist teaching. The change of creed apparently lent a touch of greater humanism and more cosmopolitan sympathy to the teacher's personality and character. At the time of Harsha's visit he had around him disciples of various lands and of the most diverse persuasions. The list is said to have comprised Buddhists, Jainas, mendicants in white robes, devotees of Kṛishṇa, religious students, ascetics who pulled out their hair, followers of Kapila, materialists, followers of Kaṇāda, students of Upanishads, believers in God as creator, alchemists, students of the *Smṛitis*, students of the *Purāṇas*, those who studied the sacrifice, grammarians and followers of the *Pañcharātra* doctrine. In words reflecting the intensely scholastic atmosphere prevailing at the teacher's hermitage, Bāṇa tells us that all his disciples were diligently following their own tenets, pondering, urging objections, raising doubts, resolving them, giving etymologies, disputing, studying and explaining. Even the birds and the beasts of the hermitage, says the author with fine poetical conceit, responded to the Buddhist teaching and religious practices. Very characteristic of the quietest teaching of Buddhism was the pose of the saint at the time of the king's visit. Upon him waited some tame tigers, near his seat sat undisturbed some lion-cubs, his feet were licked by some deer. On his left hand was perched a young dove eating wild rice. His right hand poured water on a peacock standing near, or strewed grains of rice for the ants. The very dress and appearance of the saint betokened his humility. He was clad in a very soft red garment, his gentle bright eye was bent down in humility. He was, as the author sums up in well-chosen words, "one whom Buddha himself might well approach with reverence, Duty herself might worship, Favour itself show favour to, Honour itself honour, Reverence itself revere."

We may lastly quote Bāṇa's description of the Śabara youth Nirghāta, (no doubt Sanskritised from the vernacular name) whom Harsha met in the Vindhya forest, as illustrating the type of hillmen inhabiting the region at that time. With a true eye to the aboriginal rule of relationship through females, the author introduces the youth as the sister's son of a general of the Sabaras. His physical features were distinctive of the well-known Vindhyan aboriginal type. His dark forehead, we are told, was furrowed with an involuntary triple frown, his bleared eye with its scanty lashes had a natural red lustre, his nose was flat, his lower lip thick, his chin low, his jaws full, his forehead and cheek bones projecting, his neck a little bent down while one half of his shoulder stood up. He had of course enormous physical strength. His brawny chest,

we read, was expanded by the constant exercise of bending the bow, his pair of arms was long, he had a thin belly but prominent navel, his pair of arms was long, he had a thin belly but prominent navel, his brawny and fleshy thighs contrasted with his thin waist. He was of course a famous hunter. Though no mention is made of his dress which must have been of the scantiest, his personal get-up and ornamentation are described with minute accuracy and correctness in detail. His hair, we are told, was tied high above his forehead with a coil of dark creeper, he wore a tawny crystal ear-ring which was coloured green with a parrot's wing used for ornament. On his forearm he wore a tin armlet decorated with white beads, its back was covered with a bundle of roots (supposed to be an antidote against poison) which were fastened with bristles of boars. His formidable loins were guarded by a sword of which the end was anointed with quicksilver and the handle was made with polished horn, its sheath was adorned with spotted skins of snakes. The quiver he wore on his back was made of bear's skin and contained arrows with crescent-shaped heads. It was wrapped round his body with a spotted leopard's skin. On his left shoulder rested a formidable bow adorned with profuse pigment of peacock's gall, the sinews being fastened with tough roots of trees. From his stout arms was suspended a dead hare with its head hanging downwards. A freshly killed partridge was strung at the extremity of his bow.

A keen observer of different types, Bāṇa could not but be impressed with the regional differences among his countrymen. In a remarkable passage prefacing a long list of kings who came to a tragic end through overconfidence or carelessness we are told, "Thus do national types vary like the dress, features, food and pursuits of countries, village by village, town by town, district by district, continent by continent and clime by clime." A striking illustration of this statement is furnished by Bāṇa's reference to the different propitiatory ceremonies resorted to at the time of Prabhākaravardhana's illness. There we are told of a Dravidian who was preparing to solicit the vampire with the offering of a skull, while an Āndhra man was holding up his arms like a rampart (or according to another reading, was exhibiting the entrails of a sacrificed animal) to conciliate the dreaded goddess Chāṇḍī.¹⁰

¹⁰ CT pp. 115-16, corr. by K. *Notes* II, p. 36 and G. Chap. IV. *Notes* p. 86 (the child-prince Harsha); CT pp. 116-17 (the boy Bhaṇḍi); A. ill. 40-41 (Harsha's tiger-claw neck-ornament and Bhaṇḍi's sidelocks); CT pp. 120-21 (Princes Kumāragupta and Mādhavagupta). CT pp. 150-51 (Queen Yaśovatī on her fatal journey); *ibid* pp. 180-82, K. *Notes* II pp. 141-52, G. Chap. VI *Notes* pp. 244-49 (General Siṃhanāda); CT pp. 189-91, K. *Notes* II, pp. 156-58, G. Chap. VI *Notes* pp. 268-74 (elephant-commander Skanda-

gupta); CT pp. 49-50, K. *Notes* I, p. 124, G. Chap. II *Notes* pp. 39-41 (door-keeper Pāriyātra); CT p. 263-65, K. *Notes* I pp. 200-06 G. Chap. III *Notes* pp. 47-52 (Śaiva saint Bhairavāchārya); CT p. 86, K. *Notes* I pp. 197-99, G. Chap. III *Notes* pp. 44-46, A. Plate VII ill. no. 30 (Bhairavāchārya's disciple Tīṭibha); CT pp. 236-37, K. *Notes* II pp. 221-25 (Buddhist saint Divākaramitra); CT pp. 230-32, K. *Notes* II pp. 215-18, A. pp. 185-87 (Nirghāta the Śabara); CT p. 192 (national types). A detailed identifi-

Bāṇa's descriptions of historical and natural scenes

Bāṇa's wide range of historical portraits is paralleled by that of his description of scenes to which we shall next turn our attention. The scope of these descriptions extends from the pomp and bustle of the royal camp and court to the simplicity of ascetics' hermitages and the wild solitude of forest settlements. We may first quote the graphic and detailed account of festivities at the court and capital attending the birth of Prince Harsha. The family priest, the white-clad Brāhmaṇas and the family elders were of course present to bless the new-born child. The freeing of crowds of prisoners evidently suffering long terms of imprisonment was in keeping with the joyousness of the occasion. Illustrative of the general license allowed on such occasions in the statement that the market was given up to general pillage and that even the seclusion of the harem was broken by the boisterous populace, while the distinction between master and servant, old and young, the intoxicated and the sober was lost. A scene of gorgeousness was furnished by the arrival of wives of feudatory princes who looked 'like troops of *Apsarases* lighted upon the earth' and were attended by servants bearing presents of flower-garlands, crystal-white camphor, saffron scents in jewelled caskets, sandal-white arecanuts in ivory boxes, vermilion and powder-boxes and betel-rolls. Scenes of scandal were presented by the liberties which drunken, low maids, intoxicated bawds, naughty slave boys and other low folk took with grave and sedate courtiers and even with ascetics. A Bacchanalian touch was furnished by the display of wine-booths like shower-baths, the dances of young men in thousands and the lascivious dances of harlots to the accompaniment of numerous musical instruments. To the joyous dances of the wives of the feudatories were added those of the queens gathered beneath a forest of white parasols "as if they were wood-nymphs roaming beneath trees of paradise."¹¹

In striking contrast to the joyous scenes above described is the gloomy picture of the capital city and court at the time of Prabhākara's fatal illness. At the approach of this awful calamity all rejoicings and all business were of course suspended. Speaking of the capital Bāṇa says, 'Its sounds of triumph were departed, sunk the booming of its drums, checked its minstrelsy, its festivity expelled. No troubadours

cation of the types of Divākaramitra's disciples after Bāṇa's description is attempted by A. pp. 190-92. The scholastic atmosphere attributed to Divākaramitra's hermitage is paralleled in real life in Hsien Tsang's contemporary account of the great Buddhist monastery at Nalanda: Bāṇa's acquaintance with the Vindhyan aboriginal type is again illustrated in his vivid picture of the Śābara general Mātāṅga in

Kādambarī pp. 29-31. For refs. to rites of Āndhra and Draviḍa men vide CT p. 135. In *Kādambarī* pp. 226-28 we have a vivid picture of an old Draviḍa ascetic at the temple of Chandikā.

¹¹ The above is based upon the rendering in CT pp. 111-15. Cf. *Kādambarī* p. 70 for a similar but less complete account of the festivities attending the birth of a prince.

sang, no merchandise was exposed for sale in the shops.' In their stead were being performed numerous propitiatory ceremonies for the king's recovery, which reflected the wide variety of beliefs and superstitions prevalent at that time. Here and there, we are told, were being performed *koṭihoma* sacrifices (so called for the number of libations offered therein) which are regarded as capable of warding off physical ailments and other misfortunes. In some places loving kinsmen were observing the vow of *parīśayana* (fasting before a deity to secure some desired object) to appease the god Śiva. Simultaneously an Āndhra and a Dravidian were performing their respective weird-rites to which we have just referred. Nor were there wanting touching instances of sacrifice on the part of courtiers for ensuring the king's recovery. Young nobles, we are told, were burning themselves with torches to propitiate the Divine Mothers, young servants were pacifying the god Mahākāla by holding melting gums on their heads, while relatives were cutting off their own flesh with keen knives. As a last desperate resort young courtiers were openly resorting to the sale of human flesh. As if to prepare us for the coming tragedy, an Inferno-showman (*Yamapaṭṭika*) was exhibiting by means of a wand held in his right hand a canvas painted with the figure of Yama the dreadful god of death, which he supported in his left hand by a number of upright sticks. While expounding the punishments of mortals in the next world, he chanted a verse to the effect that numbers of mothers and fathers, children and wives had passed away age after age and that neither did they belong to anybody nor anybody to them.

Similar scenes were enacted at the same time inside the palace. Not only were family deities being worshipped, but sacrificial oblations were being prepared for preserving the life of the king. Some were performing sacrifices which involved the offering of six oblations to the six deities (*Ṣaḍāhutihoma*). Others were offering oblations as a preservative against spirits and were chanting the *mahāmāyurī* hymn for the purification of the household. Elsewhere earnest Brāhmaṇas were occupied in muttering Vedic texts. The Rudra hymns were being muttered in a temple of Śiva, while the image of that deity was being bathed by pious devotees with a thousand vessels of milk. Monarchs forgetting their bath, food and sleep were passing day and night in the king's courtyard, listening to the news of his health from his attendants.¹²

Bāṇa's long and detailed account of Harsha's march 'for the subjugation of all the four quarters,' which occupies the greater part of Chapter VIII and is the fullest of its kind in the literature of Ancient Indian chronicles, gives us a succession of picturesque incidents described

¹² Based upon CT pp. 135-37. The *Mahāmāyurī* is essentially a charm against serpents going back to the oldest Buddhist times. (For an exhaustive

account vide Sylvain Lévi, *La Catalogue Géographique des Yakṣa dans la Mahāmāyurī*, JA, 1915, pp. 19-138.)

with the author's usual mastery of touch. The preliminaries consisted of an elaborate round of rituals and ceremonies intended to ensure good luck to the king. The day of march was at first calculated by astronomers a hundred times (so that there might be no mistake.) The king, on that day, having bathed in vessels of gold and silver and worshipped Śiva (his tutelary deity), and having fed the sacred fire, whose flames curved towards the right (a good omen), and bestowed most precious gifts on Brāhmaṇas, sat upon a throne covered with tiger-skin. His weapons and his body were anointed with sandalpaste. He wore two silk garments marked with a pair of royal swans. He wound upon his forearm an amulet-ribbon together with a seal-bracelet to prosper his departure. He was sprinkled on the head with lustral water by the *purohita*. He sent as presents to vassal kings vehicles and ornaments of great value. He released prisoners and restored to favour three specified classes of persons. Thus fortified with all good omens and acclaimed by the delighted cries of his subjects, the king issued forth from his house to set on foot an Age of gold.' Reaching the starting place Harsha found a structure suitable for the occasion. It was a large temple built of reeds, not far from the city and close to the river Sarasvatī. With its lofty pillared gateway and its altar supporting golden pitchers, it must have presented an imposing aspect.

The commencement of the march was begun with due solemnity. Amid the profound stillness of the night a deep boom of the marching drum announced the hour of marching. After a short pause eight sharp strokes were given on the drum to announce the number of *krośas* to be covered in the day's march. This became the signal for the sounding of drums, trumpets, horns and other musical instruments. It also gave rise to a confused scene of bustle and animation described in detail by the author, as the motley throng of human beings and animals suddenly roused themselves from their slumbers, as the camp equipage and stores were gathered in and placed on the backs of animals, and as the horses and elephants were made ready for harnessing. Very realistic touches are presented by the references to tall horses from *Taṅgaṇa* country providing comfortable seats to their Khakkhāṭa riders because of the steady motion of their quick footfalls and to the mules causing trouble to their Deccan riders unused to the same. We have an interesting glimpse into the hardships caused by the march in the statement that people starting from hovels which had been crushed by elephants' feet assaulted the elephant-keepers with clods of earth. Illustrative of the morals of camp-life is the casual reference to the carriages of high-born nobles' wives being thronged with roguish emissaries sent by princes of rank.

Meanwhile a scene of unexampled brilliance was being enacted in front of the king's residence, as the chieftains arrived there from every side to pay their respects. They were mounted on female elephants with riders holding up bows striped with gold-leaf, with other attendants

carrying swords and javelin-cases, with betel-bearers waving chowries over them, with their saddles curving with scimitars and bristling with golden arrows. As they moved, the clash of their swaying foot-rests augmented the sound from the precious stones in their anklets. Their dangling ear-rings became entangled with their pearl necklaces. "They wore tunics darkened by black diamonds, Chinese curiasses, coats and doublets with clusters of bright pearls, bodies speckled with various colours and shawls of the shade of parrots' tails. Their heads were wrapped in shawls of a soft saffron hue. They had linen turbans inlaid with gems."

At sunrise with the signal conch repeatedly ringing to announce his approach Harsha attired and attended with becoming magnificence came forth riding a female elephant. As the crowns of kings bowed at his approach with heads all agleam with the light of golden diadems, the rays of their blazing crest-jewels waved downwards, aslant and upwards. The king's starting on his march was attended with suitable display. He started, as Bāṇa tells us, amid the booming of drums, the sprinkling of masses of vermilion powder, the waving of chowries, the display of umbrellas with golden handles, and the din of clanging gold and silver ornaments of horses. The king himself was surprised at the magnitude of his forces.

We have next a wonderfully life-like picture of the manifold incidents of the march, drawn no doubt from the author's reminiscences of the same or similar scenes. A 'multitudinous babble' of voices arose as the recalcitrant or straggling men, women and even animals on the march were being coaxed or urged by others in mild or humorous or angry tones. The different types of persons assembled in the camp offered an instructive contrast in human psychology. Thus we are told that groups of elephantmen, donkey-boys, camp-followers and the like, being satisfied with their easily acquired meals, expressed their approval of camp-life with boisterous jubilation. On the other hand the poor unattended nobles conveying their provisions upon fainting oxen provided by the wretched villagers expressed their disgust in measured language. The king's hired porters carrying heavy clubs and bearing golden footstools, betel-boxes and so forth pushed everybody aside in their pride at being in charge of the royal appurtenances. By their side marched the humble kitchen attendants carrying a varied assortment of provisions ('goats attached to thongs of pigskin', 'hanging sparrows, and forequarters of venison', 'young rabbits, pot-herbs and bamboo-shoots', butter-milk in pots protected by wet seals on their mouths) along with cooking appliances of various sorts. Strikingly different was the attitude of the discontented village servants who, set to scare on the feeble oxen, were indiscriminately badgering the whole body of nobles. Equal contrast was presented by the crowd attracted from the countryside by curiosity to see the king. With sly humour the author remarks how rogues who had appropriated to themselves the endowments of lands granted

to Brāhmaṇas (alternatively, wretches from the villages granted thus) passed near with presents, and while flying before the angry and fierce staff-bearers, still from a distance kept their eyes fixed upon the king. Bringing to light imaginary wrongs of former provincial officers, praising hundreds of former (subordinate) officials and mentioning the misdeeds of the irregular troops they craved protection of their crops. Again, while some who were contented with the protecting officers to whom orders had been issued to that effect were praising the king, others whose ripe corn had been taken away came forth with their families and began reviling the king at the imminent risk of their lives. While these psychological contrasts were being presented by the army on the march, there were also taking place animated scenes of various kinds. In one place the excited crowd pursued and hunted down hares. Elsewhere foragers in their dirty torn dresses were running about with bundles of fodder. Here a group of riders was occupied in rehearsing(?) the coming Gauḍa war. There shrieking quarrelsome Brāhmaṇas who had mounted the tops of trees were being expelled by the rods of chamberlains standing on the ground. The talk of the stout-armed princes who gathered around their king in his quarters at the end of the march breathed the spirit of bravado characteristic of this class.

We are next introduced to Harsha's reception of Haṃsavega, the confidential envoy of the king of Prāgjyotiṣa, who arrived on the same day at the king's quarters. Illustrative of the court etiquette of those days is the description of the scene as the envoy entered the king's presence. While still at some distance, he fell prostrate on the courtyard with his five limbs in homage. At the king's gracious summons to draw near, he approached at a run and buried his forehead in the foot-stool. The king having laid a hand on his back, he approached the presence again and once more bowed. Finally he assumed a position not far away indicated by a kindly glance from the king. The envoy's first act was to present to the king in courtly style his master's gift of a precious family heir-loom in the shape of a marvellous umbrella 'derived from Varuṇa'. When the king and his courtiers had finished inspecting this wonderful article, the servants displayed the remaining presents consisting of ornaments, silken garments, jewels, leather buckles and other choice manufactures as well as animal and forest products of various kinds along with rare birds and beasts. The success of the mission was complete. Explaining the object of his mission to the king the same night in private, the courtly ambassador gave a number of curiously vague and general grounds leading his master King Bhāskaravarman to desire "an imperishable alliance" with Harsha. In his turn Harsha declared himself to be so much impressed with Bhāskaravarman's virtues that he expressed his keen desire to see the king ere long. To this the ambassador replied that his master would arrive to see Harsha in a few days.

The next important incident that took place during Harsha's march was his meeting with Bhaṇḍi, who arrived a few days later with the spoils of the Malwa campaign won by Rājyavardhana's victorious arms. The list, which may be taken to be true to fact on the whole, illustrates the rich resources of a small Hindu kingdom in those days as also the contemporary rules of warfare. Among the spoils are mentioned huge elephants, swift horses, ornaments of various kinds, yak-tail chowries, a white umbrella with a golden stick, dancing-girls, the regal paraphernalia of the Malwa king and all his adherents with their feet restrained by iron fetters.¹³

We may now proceed to describe Bāṇa's account of his own reception by Harsha in the king's magnificent camp close to the Ajirvatī river. The picture, though not free from courtly exaggeration, gives us a faithful picture of the imperial splendour of Harsha at a somewhat later period of his reign. Entering the camp, the astonished visitor observed one by one the tents of subject kings. The scene presented a striking *ensemble* of mass and colour. In one part it was dark with crowds of elephants all gay with banners, clothes, kettledrums, conches, chowries and unguents. Another part seemed all in waves with prancing horses adorned with chowries and ornaments. In another part it was tawny with troops of camels with ornamented mouths, necks, ears and bodies. Yet another part was all white with masses of umbrellas encrusted with pearls, rubies and other gems. Another part was waving with thousands of chowries. Equally striking was the gorgeous display of colour presented by the variegated equipages (shell-amulets in elephants' ears, elephants' banners, umbrellas of peacocks' feathers, muslin and linen robes) and jewels (emeralds, rubies, sapphires and *mahānīla* stones). A vast multitude of human beings—conquered hostile vassal-chiefs and kings of various countries seeking audience, ascetics and mendicants of various persuasions, "natives of every land, savages from every forest that fringes the sea-shore and ambassadors from every foreign country", thronged the camp.

The next scene takes us to the stables of the king's favourite horses and the king's favourite elephant justly called Darpaśāta ('one who destroys the power of other elephants'), which were visited by Bāṇa on his way to the royal presence. With evident exaggeration the author describes the horses as coming from all lands (Vanāyu, Āraṭṭa, Kamboja, Bharadvāja, Sindhu and Pārasika) famed in his time for providing the

¹³ The above is based upon CT pp. 197-225 supplemented by K. *Notes* II pp. 165-209. For a detailed exposition of Harsha's march (after Bāṇa's description) under seven distinct heads with illustrations of the chieftains' dress and accoutrements, vide A. pp. 139-66. The trans. 'he released prisoners and restored to favour three specified classes of persons' etc. follows the Hindi

rendering of the text (A. p. 137). The same rendering (A. p. 146) is followed in the trans. 'providing comfortable seats to their Khakkhaṭa riders' (identified by Dr. Agrawala with the ancient Khokkhaṭa tribe of Central Punjab between the Jhelum and the Chenab). The Taṅgaṇa country lies to the north of modern Garhwal (A. *loc. cit.*).

best breed of these noble animals. Bāṇa's further description exhibits such wonderful insight into the habits of these creatures as could only be derived from minute observation. The horses, says the author, were with difficulty restrained by the ropes fixed tightly in the ground on both sides. They seemed to grow longer as they struggled with one foot thrust out of the rope's confinement. Their eyes were closing. Their limbs were itching and their skins being first grasped and then let go by the teeth were spotted with bits of foam dark with the juice of the *dūrvā* grass. Some stood lazily moving their tails with one side of their loins drooping as they rested on one hoof. Others sought for food while the pupils of their eyes trembled for fear at the yells of the angry *Chañḍālas* who guarded them. Of the royal elephant Bāṇa gives us an elaborate account in his usual high-flown style, which likewise illustrates his accurate and wide knowledge of the habits of these animals.

In the last scene Harsha himself is brought before our eyes in all his imperial splendour as he looked when Bāṇa stood in the presence. At a distance from the king stood in a line his faithful attendants 'like so many golden pillars'. Near him were seated his special favourites. He sat on a stone throne with ivory feet, resting the whole weight of his body on one arm. His left foot was placed on a large foot-stool made of sapphire and was being attended by a shampooing woman. His lower garment was radiant with shot-silk thread and ornamented with jewels of his girdle. His upper garment was embroidered with clusters of stars. A profusion of ornaments adorned his person. His locks were encircled with a wreath of flowers. A number of courtesans brightened the scene with their suggestive glances and movements of their limbs.¹⁴

Bāṇa's faculty of accurate and vivid description is not confined to his narration of scenes of rejoicing, of gloomy anxiety and of pomp and splendour in the royal court and camp. His picture of the Vindhyan forest-settlement (*vanagrāmaka*) which Harsha visited in quest of his lost sister illustrates with striking realism the contemporary life in the backwoods. Life in such surroundings could not but be extremely strenuous. The sparsely scattered fields with their few clear spaces, their black soil stiff as iron and their masses of impenetrable bushes could only be cultivated with difficulty. The settlers, however, were equal

¹⁴ Based upon CT pp. 46-64 with the additions and emendations in K. Notes I pp. 116f; G. Ch. 11 Notes pp. 31-76. Vide A. pp. 37-47 for an elaborate and learned exposition of the whole scene. Darpaśāta means 'one who destroys the power of other elephants' (K. Notes I p. 128 correcting CT 51n). Bāṇa's accurate knowledge of the habits of horses is again proved by his description of the wonderful horse Indrāyudha presented to Prince Chandrāpīḍa by his father (*Kādambari* pp. 78-80). With the above picture of

Harsha in open durbar cf. *Kādambari* pp. 8-10 (description of King Śūdraka in his council-chamber as seen by the *Chañḍāla* maiden). The ancient Indian palace as described in *Harshacharita* and *Kādambari* consisted of a large enclosure or camp (*skandhāvāra*) inside which lay the palace proper (*rājakula*) comprising a public and a private hall of audience (*bāhya-āsthānamandapa* and *bhukta-āsthānamandapa*) and the royal residence (*dhavalagriha*) (vide A. s.v. and Plates 25-28).

to the task. With the settlement bordered on all sides by forest and depending on the spade alone for their cultivation, the settlers were dividing small pieces of rice-fields and threshing grounds in high-pitched language. The uncontrolled foresters forcibly seized the axes of trespassing woodcutters. Mention is also made of tiger-traps set up in wrath at the slaughter of young calves as well as of watchmen's scaffolds erected near the fields to prevent the depredations of wild beasts. Fighting with such heavy odds the settlers could yet provide for themselves granaries of wild corn as well as cattle-pens formed out of dry branches around the huge banyans. Nor were they wanting in exhibitions of piety and charity. In dense thickets of the forest were built arbours of the goddess Durgā. In every direction at the entrance to the forest there were drinking arbours made of (or under, according to another interpretation) wayside trees. There were newly dug small wells near which were planted *Nāgasphuṭa* bushes. At the tiny huts made of closely woven wattles were kept ready trays with barley-meal for travellers as well as water-jars of various kinds with proper cooling arrangements. Highly characteristic of the settlement were the occupations of its people. We are told of blacksmiths who 'were almost intensifying the heat by burning heaps of wood for charcoal'. There were, besides, people from surrounding areas who entered the forest to collect timber. With wonderful realism Bāṇa tells us how these people anointing their bodies with oil for their hard task, carrying strong axes on their shoulders, with breakfast bundles and water-jars suspended from their necks by means of creeper-coils and barks of black bamboo, arrayed in ragged clothes for fear of thieves, while leaving their provisions to be guarded by old men in the neighbouring villages, drove pairs of strong oxen before them. There were also the hunters with snares of various kinds, fowlers with cages for falcons, partridges and the like, childish trappers (or according to another interpretation, possessors of small nets) catching female sparrows, as well as young hunters practising bird-catching with dogs and partridges. Other people were carrying bundles of birch, flowers, cotton-plants, flax and hemp, quantities of honey, peacock's feathers and wreaths of wax and so forth. The village-wives carrying on their heads baskets full of forest-fruits were hastening to neighbouring villages with thoughts of sale. The agricultural processes and crops were sufficiently advanced for such a young settlement. We hear of lines of wagons that were bringing heaps of manure for preparation of the poor soil. A highly realistic touch is given to the picture by the author's statement that the angry cries of ploughboys sitting on the poles, while urging on the strong oxen, were added to the creaking of the loose and noisy wheels. We hear also of numerous sugarcane enclosures with carefully tended branches. What precautions were taken to ensure the safety of these precious trees is illustrated by the author's reference to the buffalo skeletons which were fixed on sticks to scare away the rabbits. In an earlier passage reference is made to mango-trees with bunches of juicy fruits which were preserved

by means of water-besprinkled leaves. Last came the dwelling-houses sharing in the general simplicity but not without their complement of useful plants and trees and accommodation for man and beast. Orchards of emerald-green milk-hedge plant, says the author, enclosed the houses, thickets of bamboo supplied the means of making bows; clumps of various plants and trees made up the dense house-gardens; underneath the courtyard trees were constructed small tanks with drinking vessels for birds; the walls were made of partitions made of slips of bamboo, leaves, stalks and reeds; the *gorochanā* pigment and *kimśuka* flowers were used for their ornament. Inside the houses were gathered heaps of charcoal, tree-cotton, rice, lily-roots, seeds and fruits of various kinds. There were also collections of living pets like wild cats, snakes, ichneumons and so forth.¹⁵

In the depths of the Vindhya forest amid a typical sylvan scene lay the hermitage of the Buddhist teacher Divākaramitra above mentioned. Bāṇa's description does credit to his knowledge of the rich plant and animal life of a typical forest region, as well as his eye for natural beauty. The approaches to the hermitage, we learn, were crowded with trees and plants of various kinds like the dark green *naladas*, the yellow *nāgakeśaras*, the red *aśokas*, the dark *tamālas* and so forth. Hens, sparrows, parrots and other birds, hares, antelopes, monkeys, nay even wolves, elephants, hyenas and boars filled the picture. Evidence of the ascetics' handiwork was found in the water-basins made with sand at the foot of trees, the artificial canals turning the courses of mountain-streams, the water-pots hanging from the branches of trees, the empty begging-bowls suspended by looped strings, the pink-red model *chaityas* (funeral monuments or sacred trees), the water coloured with the dye of brown rags and so forth.¹⁶

In striking contrast to the bustle and commotion of the royal court and camp as well as the wild life of the backwoods is the serene atmosphere of the Brāhmaṇa settlement where Bāṇa had his home. With loving reminiscence Bāṇa tells us how the homes of his kindred appeared to him after many years of absence 'like so many hermitages for the incarnate three Vedas'. They were of course resonant with the noise of the continual recitation of the *Vedas*. With fine poetical conceit Bāṇa tells us how the parrots and *mainās*, having repeatedly heard the Vedic recitations of the teachers, themselves repeated the texts to the great relief of the latter. The houses of course were provided with the requisites for the performance of sacrifice. The terraces in front of the doors, we are told, were green with little beds of freshly watered *soma* plants, the grains required for sacrificial cakes were laid out to dry on the skins of black antelopes, heaps of *udumbara* branches were collected for making

¹⁵ Abstracted from CT pp. 225-29. For a detailed exposition of the whole account under ten heads, vide A. pp. 179-84.

¹⁶ Based upon CT pp. 233-37. Cf. *Kādambarī* pp. 38-41 for a similar description of the Vindhyan hermitage of the sage Jābāla.

stakes for the sacrificial altars, young spotted goats required for sacrifice were playing about. The occupations of the householders were in keeping with the situation. Young students ran about with their long tawny braids of hair and their foreheads marked white with their sectarian marks made of ashes, young girls strewed about oblations of wild rice to birds and other pets, the disciples were bringing fuel, leaves and bundles of *kuśa* grass, troops of ascetics were busy pounding balls of clay for making pots (*kamaṇḍalus*).

Another aspect of the life of the settlement bespeaking at once the intensely religious temperament of the author and his affectionate relations with his kinsmen is brought before us in the touching and highly realistic description of the ceremonies which he performed at the time of making his departure for the royal court in answer to the loving invitation of Prince Kṛishṇa above mentioned. In meticulous detail the author tells us how on the particular day he rose and bathed in the morning, how dressed in white silk he took his rosary and repeated the appropriate Vedic hymns and texts, how he washed the image of god Śiva with milk and offered Him worship with fragrant flowers, incense, perfumes, banners, oblations, ointments and lighted lamps, how he offered libations to the sacred fire into which were offered sesame seeds and whose flames curved to the right (an auspicious omen). Other rites and ceremonies were gone through for their auspicious significance and for averting 'the evil eye'. Bāṇa tells us in graphic detail how he distributed wealth to Brāhmaṇas according to his means, how he walked solemnly round an excellent cow facing the east, how he decked himself with white unguents, garlands and garments, how he made his ear-ornament from flowers fastened together with blades of *dūrvā* grass and how he put white mustard seed on his top-knot (evidently as a protection against the evil eye). The departure, moreover, was a social function in which all members and well-wishers of the family participated. With tender affection Bāṇa recalls how all the necessary rites were performed for him by his affectionate aunt clad in white garments and looking like the goddess Sarasvatī (or Durgā), how he was greeted with blessings by the elderly women of the family, applauded by the old female servants, dismissed with good wishes by the *gurus*, smelt on the head by the family elders, and caused to make offerings to *nakshatras* by the astrologers. The last solemn rites were reserved for the moment of departure. At this time, Bāṇa says, he looked upon a full water-jar set on an altar in the courtyard which was daubed with cow-dung, with a mango-spray placed on its mouth, itself white with five finger-marks. Saluting the family goddess and followed by his own Brāhmaṇas with flowers and fruits in their hands and uttering the *apratiratha* hymn (*Rig-veda* X 103), he started on his journey after setting his right foot first.

We have another glimpse, short but vivid, into the life of the settlement in the author's account of the evening scene on the day on which he had announced his desire of telling the story of King Harsha to his kinsmen.

The bark-garments hanging from the hut-roofs of the house-ascetics, were then being gathered in, the smoke from the chambers of the sacrificial fire was filling the sky, the sacrificers were observing the vow of silence according to rule, while their wives were wandering about restless in the recreation. The sacrificial cows, before which bundles of green *Syāmāka* rice were being scattered, were being milked. Religious students wearing matted locks of hair and hairy with their black antelope-skins were muttering prayers from their seats. *Yogins* seated in the posture of meditation were contemplating the Supreme Spirit, while their numerous disciples were running about with sounds of clapping. At the instance of inactive old Brāhmaṇa preceptors, adds the author with a sly hit at both the teacher and the taught, the concourse of blockheads, dandies and students were performing their twilight devotions with faltering utterance of the metres of the texts.

We may notice, lastly, some flash-light pictures of the life of the settlement reflecting the loving and scholarly atmosphere of its inmates, which the author holds up before us in his account of the circumstances that led him to undertake his literary project. When Bāṇa, after winning the king's high favour returned home on a certain occasion, we are told, cordial greetings were exchanged between him and his kinsmen. To his eager enquiries about the performance of sacrifices and the presentation of offerings to the sacred fire and the practice of the art of sacrifice as well as the classes in grammar, the old logic society, the *mīmāṃsā* studies and the poetical discussions, they replied by assuring him of the full performance of all ceremonies proper for a Brāhmaṇa "as far as our means permit and in due season". This was followed by some more conversations about the news of the royal camp, the remembrances of past boyish sports and the stories about ancestors. When Bāṇa had performed the proper observances and taken his meal, his kinsmen gathered around him. Presently came the reader Sudṛiṣṭi. Wearing a pair of silken garments from the Pauṇḍra country (North Bengal), with his forehead marked by *gorochanā* pigment and holy earth after bath, his hair smoothed with oil and myrobolan, with his short top-knot adorned with a chaplet of flowers, his lips brightened with the use of betel and his eyes with that of collyrium, he must have presented a strikingly decorous aspect. Arriving in the midst of the company, he sat on a seat and sitting down in front of a desk made of reed-stalks, placed on it his manuscript. Close behind him sat two flute-players, who were to furnish the accompanying music. Taking out the leaf inserted inside as a mark to indicate the portion read in the morning, Sudṛiṣṭi took out a small block of a few leaves and began his chant of the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, attracting the minds of the audience with his sweet musical intonations.¹⁷

¹⁷ Refs. in CT pp. 35-36 (life at the settlement on Bāṇa's return home). Ibid pp. 44-45 (ceremonies at the settlement on the eve of Bāṇa's departure). Ibid

p. 78 (evening scene at the settlement). Ibid pp. 70-73 (scene at settlement leading to Bāṇa's resolution to write the *Harshacharita*). For the exposition

Bāṇa's character-sketches

We have seen how Bāṇa's historical descriptions in the *Harshacharita* often show his vivid sense of realism triumphing over his literary heritage of artificial convention. Much the same remark applies to the author's characterisation of historical figures in the same work. In his formal estimates of the kings, queens, princes, courtiers, hermits and others who fill his canvas, Bāṇa closely follows the prevailing *Kāvya* model, but the detailed accounts of their career often illustrate with striking vividness the distinctive traits of their character. In the result Bāṇa's characters are in most cases stamped with a degree of individuality unknown to any other chronicle of Ancient India with the single exception of Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*.

It will be convenient for us to begin with Bāṇa's character-sketch of Pushpabhūti, Harsha's remote ancestor. Bāṇa's formal description of this king's character is as conventional in form and substance as Subandhu's characterization of king Chintāmaṇi or Bāṇa's own characterization of kings Śudraka and Tārāpiḍa. In describing the incidents of Pushpabhūti's career, Bāṇa, however, gives us a quite distinctive picture of the passionate, almost fanatical, faith of the king in God Śiva—a trait which he attributes in courtly language to the natural wilfulness of great minds. From boyhood upwards, says the author, the king, untaught by any man, entertained a great, almost inborn, devotion towards the Lord Śiva: from all other gods he turned away: his household and his subjects thought it fit to humour his faith. It is no doubt in the light of this distinctive trait that we have to understand not only his honoured reception of the Śivite teacher Bhairavāchārya at his court, but also his rather quixotic offer of 'himself', his harem, his court and his treasury to the saint on the occasion of the latter's visit. For the rest he appears before us as a king of great courage (shown by his sharing the saint's dreadful vigil in the cremation-ground at dead of night), prowess (proved by his overthrow of the tutelary Nāga deity in single combat) and magnanimity (illustrated by his craving of the goddess Lakshmi the boon of success of the saint).¹⁸

Bāṇa introduces Prabhākaravardhana, Harsha's father, in the style of conventional praise familiar to *Kāvya* compositions. Bāṇa's subsequent narrative of events, however, throws welcome light upon the realistic traits of the king's character. Prabhākaravardhana evidently inherited his ancestor's deep piety, being as ardent a devotee of the Sun as Pushpa-

of the last scene, vide A. pp. 51-53. The trans. of *naichika* as 'cow yielding milk perpetually' in the description of the ceremonies attendant on Bāṇa's departure follows the Hindi rendering in A.

¹⁸ Refs. in CT pp. 83-84 (general reference to Pushpabhūti). Cf. *Kādambari*

pp. 5-6, 53-56 (general characterizations of kings Śudraka and Tārāpiḍa); *Vāsavadattā* of Subandhu pp. 10-43. (similar description of King Chintāmaṇi). See also CT pp. 84-85 (distinctive characteristic of Pushpabhūti); *ibid* pp. 92-97 (story of his connexion with Bhairavāchārya).

bhūti was of Śiva. Day by day at sunrise, says the author, he bathed, arrayed himself in white silk, wrapped his head in a white cloth and facing eastwards offered on the ground in a circle smeared with saffron-paste a bunch of red lotuses set in a pure vessel of ruby. To the royal qualities of this king—his valour and heroism, his appreciation of merit, his sturdy and handsome frame—touching references are made by Queen Yaśovati in her parting address to Prince Harsha, as also by the Princes Rājyavardhana and Harsha in their posthumous reminiscences of their departed sire. That these encomiums were not without some basis is proved by the author's casual reference to the fact that on the very day on which the King's death was rumoured, the lord of Malwa killed Prabhākaravardhana's son-in-law Grahavarman of Kanauj and seemed to threaten Thanesar itself.

No trait, however, is so conspicuously brought out in Prabhākaravardhana's character as the extraordinary warmth of his affections. To the boy Bhaṇḍi, whom queen Yaśovati's brother presented at court for serving the little princes, Prabhākaravardhana became attached as to 'an additional son'. When his sons grew up to manhood the King appointed as their honourable attendants the two sons of the Malwa King 'inseparable as my arms from my sides'. Of the young physician Rasāyana, who attended Prabhākaravardhana at his death-bed, we are told that he was 'cherished like a son by the King'. In paying his tribute of respect to the memory of Rasāyana, Prince Harsha says, 'Was not my father his father, my mother his mother, we his brothers?' His father, as the Prince continues, was 'to his dependants ambrosia itself, a veritable kinsman, unfailing in his favours'. It was above all in his relations with his children that the King's affectionate nature was displayed most conspicuously. The King's speech to his worthy spouse promising the marriage of his 'darling Rājyaśrī' with the Maukhari Prince Grahavarman breathes tender affection for his daughter along with pain at her approaching separation. The King's paternal affection was shown at its best during his last fatal illness. In words of moving pathos which bear reproduction in substance, the author describes the scenes following Harsha's arrival at his dying father's bedside. As soon as the King perceived his darling son, racked as he was by extreme pain, he put out his arms and half rose from the couch, calling to him, 'Come to me, come to me!'. When the Prince hastily drew near with dutifully downcast looks, the King raised his son's head by force and took him to his bosom. 'Limb pressed to limb, cheek joined to cheek, closing eyes which flowed with incessant drops, he held his son in a long embrace forgetting all the torment of the fever.' When the Prince, reluctantly released, sat down near the couch, the King gazed upon him with eyes that seemed to drink him in with their fixed look. "Again and again he touched him with trembling palms and speaking with some difficulty—for his throat was dry through sickness—'My boy,' he said, 'you are thin'." Being told that the Prince had not taken food for three days, the King could only

after a long sigh express in tear-choked accents his poignant grief at the distress of his well-beloved and distinguished son. He ended with the words of tender expostulation: 'Not till you have eaten will I myself take my diet.' When Harsha, distracted with fresh grief at his mother's suicide, went back to his father's side and flung himself with a flood of tears at the parental feet, the King, whose eyes were closing, recovered consciousness on hearing the Prince's ceaseless weeping. With his last words of comfort addressed to his sorrowing son, he 'closed his eyes never to open them more'.¹⁹

Rājyavardhana, elder son of Prabhākaravardhana, is introduced to us in the same language of conventional compliment as Pushpabhūti and Prabhākaravardhana. To quote Bāṇa's short account, he was 'a Prince composed as if of lightning atoms to quell the cabals of all Kings'; he was 'capable of supporting the whole world's weight'; he was 'the heart-shaker of all Kings'. Bāṇa's subsequent narrative of events enables us to acquaint ourselves with more realistic glimpses into the Prince's character. From a reminiscence put into the mouth of Harsha after the tragic death of his brother, it follows that the latter surpassed even his mighty father in the strength of his physical frame. Rājyavardhana seems to have equalled, if not surpassed, his father also in his prowess. How well he justified the confidence of his father, who sent him on his attaining the military age to attack the Hūṇas 'as a lion despatches his whelp against the deer', is proved by Bāṇa's casual reference to his still wearing at the time of his mourning 'the long white bandages bound about arrow wounds received in battle' against these barbarians. His heroism is also proved by 'the ridiculous ease' with which he routed the army of the Malwa king, the murderer of his brother-in-law. But this great warrior of iron frame surpassed even his father in the warmth of his family affections. His deep devotion to his noble sire is recalled in a pathetic passage in course of Harsha's self-musing after Prabhākaravardhana's death. "He was," says the Prince, "ever singing to me our father's praises, 'Think you Harsha, that any man ever did or will possess such a shapely frame, tall as a golden palm... What other is high-minded, valiant and generous? The most convincing proof of Rājyavardhana's deep filial affection is furnished by the touching scenes following his arrival at the capital after his father's death. After his first passionate outburst of grief at the meeting with his brother, Rājyavardhana addressed him in a characteristic speech in the presence of the assembled vassal kings. It is the speech of a noble soul who, according to his own showing, had been bereft of courage, wisdom and discernment by overwhelming grief for his departed sire. The universal practice, he admits, which was followed even by his

¹⁹ Based upon CT pp. 101-02 (general description of Prabhākaravardhana); *ibid* p. 104 with corr. by K., I. *Notes* pp. 153, 155, 158-59, 173 (detailed notices). CT p. 117 (Prabhākaravardhana's affection for Bhaṇḍi); *ibid*

p. 119 (affection for sons of the Malwa king); p. 144 (affection for physician Rasāyana); p. 145 (Harsha's reminiscence); pp. 122-23 (king's affection for his daughter); pp. 141-43, 155-56 (king's death-bed speeches).

own father, is for the son to succeed to the paternal throne. It is again, as he allows, the part of cowardice and womanishness to be subdued by grief. Nevertheless, as he pathetically observes, all his wisdom, discernment and manhood had deserted him because of his sorrow for his noble father's death. He therefore expressed the resolve, almost unique of its kind, to renounce the throne in favour of his younger brother and retire to a hermitage. Closing his speech with the words, 'I have abandoned the sword', the Prince confirmed his resolve by dramatically flinging his scimitar on the ground.

The swift and dramatic entrance of a messenger at this moment, conveying to the astonished Princes the terrible news of the slaying of Grahavarman and imprisonment of Rājyaśrī by 'the wicked lord of Malwa,' produced a complete and immediate change in Rājyavardhana's resolution. As Bāṇa observes with his remarkable insight into human character, the Prince's high spirit, naturally unbending temper, heroic family strain and affection for his stricken sister combined to banish from his heart his overmastering grief. The 'awful paroxysm of wrath,' which rose in his mind and found vivid expression in his changed physical features, led him to address his brother in words worthy of a lion-hearted king. Declaring that this task of repressing the insolent foe is his 'royal house', his 'kin', his 'court', his 'land', his 'assumption of the bark-dress' and his 'austerities' while expressing his profound contempt for the Mālavas who had dared to ill-treat the race of Pushpabhūti, the Prince concluded with the laconic command bespeaking the energy and decision of his character, 'Let all the kings, and elephants stay with you. Only Bhaṇḍi here must follow me with some ten thousand horse.'

The tragic death of Rājyavardhana gives Bāṇa the occasion for referring to another trait of the King's character, namely his over-confidingness. In a speech put into the mouth of Skandagupta, supreme commandant of the elephant-corps, the young Harsha is asked to take warning from the fate of Rājyavardhana and to give up 'this universal confidingness, so agreeable to the habits of your own land and springing from innate frankness of spirit.'²⁰

The longest and the most detailed of all historical characterisations is reserved by Bāṇa, naturally enough, for the hero of his works King Harsha. With the example of the great authors of *Kāvya* compositions before him, Bāṇa could not but paint him as the paragon of the kingly qualities. We find him accordingly indulging again and again in rhapsodies of the King's matchless qualities of head and heart. Witness, e.g., the highly panegyric reference to the King in Kṛishṇa's message inviting Bāṇa to the royal court. Compare again, the pseudo-historical comparison made by Bāṇa's cousin between Harsha and a host of ancient

²⁰ Vide CT p. 107 (general ref. to Rājyavardhana), p. 189 (Harsha's reminiscence); pp. 132, 165, 178 (Rājyavardhana's campaigns against Hūṇas

and against the Malwa king), p. 163 (Harsha's self-musing), pp. 169-71 (Rājyavardhana's grief), pp. 174-75 (his wrath), p. 192 (his overconfidingness).

Kings and heroes whose misdeeds are contrasted with 'the stainless purity' of the King.

It is in Bāṇa's detailed account of Harsha's career that we find reflected the striking individuality of the King's character. Even as a boy he was fond of daring, for when his brother marched against the Hūṇas, the younger Prince 'being at youth's adventure-loving age,' slipped away from the camp for hunting in the Himalayan forests. But the trait most conspicuously brought out in the Prince's character at this period is his ardent filial affection. When the news reached him of his father's severe illness, 'his heart was instantly splintered into a thousand pieces'. Hurrying to the capital by forced marches, he made his way at noon through the sorrowing throng of citizens and courtiers to his father's bed-side. Received by the King with the most tender affection, the Prince could only be persuaded with the utmost difficulty to break his three days' fast. Making anxious enquiries about his father's illness from the attending physicians, the Prince 'lost all fortitude' and at night-fall went again to his father's presence where in anguish of heart he spent a sleepless night, listening to the King's incessant agonising cries. Returning at dawn to his own quarters, the Prince was so sorrow-stricken that 'disregarding every duty he threw himself upon a couch and remained wrapped in his garment from head to foot'. Disturbed by the mighty signs of the coming catastrophe, he 'could scarcely live through the ensuing night'. Overcome completely the next morning by the fresh tragedy of his mother's self-immolation, the Prince rushed to the side of his father and clasping the King's feet 'burst like a common man into a long fit of weeping'. Through all the terrible night following his father's demise, the Prince 'sat with the princes, sleepless on the uncushioned ground,' while 'his tears rained down like an outpouring of his flood of affection.' As he lay in this situation, the thought of the great void caused by the death of his high-souled father filled his mind. On the morrow Harsha, roused by the appeals of the vassal kings, started forth to perform his father's last rites. After the funeral bath he 'stayed not to wring his hair, but having put on a pair of white silk robes, proceeded home full of sighs. His flushed eyes riveted to the tip of his nose bespoke his grief.' He passed some days in the same condition turning away from all avocations of life till at length, under the constant attention of faithful courtiers and sages, he gradually lost his distaste for food and the other dues of life.

Harsha's tender affection for his mother, combined with appreciation of her heroic sacrifice, is recalled to us in the course of the same narrative. As soon as the Prince heard the news of his mother's dreadful resolution to mount the funeral pyre, he was so carried away by fresh grief that he 'lost all power of action'. Recovering consciousness, he went in hot haste to his mother's apartment only to find her already prepared for her last sad journey. While still at a distance, he uttered a passionate cry and flinging himself at her feet, he implored her to be merciful and

turn back. How the heroic queen after the first outburst of grief not only controlled herself but also appealed to her son in a spirited speech not to oppose her resolution, will be told in another place. The Prince, 'deeming that act to be the better part befitting a lady of rank, stood in silence with downcast looks'.

Equal appreciation of heroic sacrifice on behalf of himself and his father was shown by the young Prince in his comment on the suicide of the physician Rasāyana, who threw himself into the flames rather than tell Harsha the painful truth about Prabhākaravardhana's illness. In a noble speech the Prince bore testimony to the youth's generous nature, his great love for the King and the undying glory of his sacrifice.

Next to his deep filial affection, the trait which is most marked in Harsha's character at this time is his tender love for his brother. As soon as Harsha had recovered from his burst of grief at his father's death, his thoughts turned to his absent brother. Recalling Rājyavardhana's deep devotion to the late King, Harsha apprehended (what indeed proved to be prophetic) that his brother in the excess of grief might decide to abandon thoughts of sovereignty and retire to a hermitage. At the subsequent meeting between the brothers Harsha gave fresh proof of his deep fraternal affection. Informed of his noble brother's arrival, the Prince moved at once by brotherly affection and grief for the late King, 'all but poured out his life along with a gushing torrent of tears'. When the elder Prince, after relieving his pent-up feelings in a passionate embrace of his brother, threw himself speechless on a couch, Harsha lay in silence by his side on a blanket laid on the ground. 'Glancing ever and anon upon his afflicted brother, he felt his heart almost split into a thousand parts;' for, as the author pithily remarks, 'the sight of a brother is a rejuvenescence of sorrow.'

Deep as was his affection for his brother, Harsha was presently to show that he was capable of sacrificing even this feeling at the higher call of duty. When Rājyavardhana, altogether overwhelmed with sorrow for his father's death, announced his astounding resolution to retire to a hermitage and asked Harsha to assume sovereignty, the virtuous younger Prince could only wonder in his mind how this man has 'like the vilest of mankind, instigated me, as one ready for any deed, to this atrocious act, as if I were no child of Pushpabhūti's line, no son of our sire, no younger brother of his own, void of affection and detected in fault.' Moved at once by the affliction of his father's death and his brother's impending retirement in the prime of life, he decided in his mind to follow Rājyavardhana's example. The sin involved in disobeying his brother, he concluded, he would dispel by 'austerity in a hermitage.'

The tragic death of Rājyavardhana added an intenser touch of poignancy to Harsha's affection for his brother. After Harsha had ordered an immediate march against the Gauda king to satisfy his vengeful feelings, the memory of his lost brother broke upon him in the solitude

of his bed-chamber with gushing tenderness. He 'wept long and silently', while reflecting upon the sad end of so vigorous a frame surpassing even that of his father. He also thought of his own baseness in surviving such a noble brother and even forgetting him in the greatness of his own rage. He ended by upbraiding destiny for 'parting a pair of happy brothers with hearts blessed in the union of mutual love'.

The affectionate memory of his brother was, again, recalled to Harsha by an incident in the course of his march against the Gaudas. After Harsha had for some time advanced by ceaseless marches against the foe, he heard that Bhaṇḍi was encamped quite near with spoils of Rājyavardhana's victorious campaign against the Malwa king. At this news 'the fire of brotherly grief woke again, his courage gave way and he retreated into the darkness, as it were, of a swoon'. Meeting the faithful and sorrowing noble who in his paroxysm of grief fell at the King's feet with a cry, Harsha 'rose, and advancing with tottering steps uplifted him and clasping his neck in a close embrace, wept long and piteously'. Then, when both had calmed their grief a little, Harsha heard from Bhaṇḍi the full facts of his brother's death.

The 'fit of anger' into which Harsha fell on hearing the tidings of his sister's and brother-in-law's fate gives us the first indication of his fierce spirit. We can similarly detect the dawn of his thirst for military glory in the remonstrance which he addressed to his brother on the latter's decision to march alone against the Malwa king. To quote his concluding words, 'Whence this your arm's excessive greediness that you desire alone to quaff the ambrosia of fame?' It was after Rājyavardhana's death that these robust qualities of Harsha's character developed themselves. The passionate cry of grief and indignation which broke from his lips at the news of his brother's murder betokened the emergence of the fiery spirit which Harsha seems to have inherited from his ancestors. 'Except the Gauda king', he cried, 'what man would by such a murder abhorred of all the world, lay such a great soul low... Apart from that ignoble wretch, in whose minds would my lord's heroic qualities find no favour?' Under the advice of his faithful minister, Śiṃhanāda, Harsha's implacable thirst for vengeance was widened into a thirst for universal conquest and domination. Guided by such feelings, he uttered his terrible vow which deserves to be quoted in full. 'By the dust of my honoured lord's feet,' he declared, 'I swear that unless in a limited number of days I clear this earth of Gaudas, and make it resound with fetters on the feet of all Kings who are excited to insolence by the elasticity of their bows, then will I hurl my sinful self, like a moth, into an oil-fed flame.' This was followed by his issue of a proclamation in sonorous terms requiring all Kings up to the furthest known limits to accept the alternative of submission or fight.

Bāṇa's description of the ensuing campaign discloses some other pleasing traits of his hero's character. A pretty anecdote told of Harsha at the beginning of his march illustrates his robust good sense. Bāṇa

tells us how while the King was staying at the place of departure, a newly made golden seal slipped from his hands and falling face downwards upon the ground, distinctly marked the lines of its letter upon the dry mud of the Sarasvatī's bank. The courtiers, who took this to be an evil omen, were depressed. But the King, contemptuously dismissing the interpretation of the dull-witted 'rustics', took it to mean that 'the earth shall be stamped with the single seal of my sole command.'

The episode of Harsha's departure for the Vindhya for the rescue of Princess Rājyaśrī brings into clear relief another admirable feature in the King's character, namely his rare affection for his sister. When the King had marched for a number of days, he heard from Bhaṇḍi (it does not appear why) the tragic news of Rājyaśrī's flight to the Vindhya forest, where all trace of her was lost. The King immediately decided himself to start for the search, leaving Bhaṇḍi to take charge of the army and continue the march. Directed by a Śābara youth, the King reached the hermitage of the Buddhist teacher Divākaramitra, to whom he unburdened the cause of his grief in the following touching words: 'I have only one young sister left, who is the sole link that keeps up my life, now that I have lost all my loved kindred. Now she, while wandering fearful of outrage from her enemies, entered the thickest of this Vindhya forest... Night after night we have been ceaselessly exploring the wood in search of her, but we have not found her.' A mendicant having arrived just at this moment with the news that a young woman, overpowered by misfortune, though highly prosperous formerly, was about to mount the funeral pyre, Harsha became apprehensive of his sister. 'Speaking with difficulty in broken accents, with his voice choked and his eyes full of tears,' he enquired about the whereabouts and other particulars of this woman. Gathering from the mendicant's 'agitated words' that this was indeed his 'poor sister', the King and his party rushed in just in time to prevent the awful tragedy. With what tender care the King nursed his sister after her rescue from a terrible death will be told in another place. When the Princess at length asked her brother's permission to assume the red robe of a Buddhist nun, Harsha's reply showed how well he could combine the kingly regard of his duties with his fraternal affection. His immediate paramount duty, he told the Buddhist teacher, was to look after his sister. 'My sister, so young and so tried by adversity, must be cherished by me for a while, even if it involves the neglect of all my royal duties.' He, however, could not but recall his vow which he had made 'in the presence of all the world' for the destruction of the insolent enemies who had slain his brother. He, therefore, conveyed to the teacher his desire that thenceforth while he discharged his vow, his sister should remain at his side and be comforted by the teacher's discourses. At the end, he assured the teacher in a tone of remarkable resignation, when he had accomplished his design, he and his sister would assume the red robe together. Gratified

with the teacher's compliance, the King returned with his sister and the holy man to the camp along the Ganges.

The high respect with which Harsha treated Divākaramitra throughout the episode just mentioned, indicates his appreciation of learning and character. Discerning patronage of these qualities is also proved by Bāṇa's account of his first reception by the King. As the author states with commendable candour, when he was first introduced into the King's presence, Harsha declared that he would not see Bāṇa as he had not shown him any favour. At the same time, addressing his favourite who sat behind him, the King said, 'He is a great gallant.' When the courtiers taken aback at this curt remark remained silent, Bāṇa ventured to address the King a mild remonstrance. Harsha, however, to continue the author's frank narrative, did not welcome him with any signs of favour, but only revealed his inward pleasure by a gracious glance. Returning to his own quarters, Bāṇa concluded from the King's behaviour that he evidently wished the author to be virtuous, 'for lords teach proper behaviour to their dependants even without words by granting them an appropriate reception.' Bāṇa's prescience was fully justified, for, as he naively remarks, when the King learned his true character, he was received with the highest honours and 'he shared in the King's wealth, his hours of unbending and his state dignity.'²¹

Bāṇa's picture of Prabhākaravardhana's chief queen Yaśovatī reveals her as one of the best examples of the heroic women of Ancient India. In the formal account of her character with which Bāṇa introduces her to his readers, she is described as "the centre of all creatures' love, confidence, duty and felicity, who upon the King's bosom shone like Lakshmi on the bosom of Hell's Vanquisher." Bāṇa's numerous references to her in the course of his subsequent narrative illustrate the realistic traits of her character. In describing her condition during her pregnancy, Bāṇa gives us a hint that she was not only a devoted wife but also a dutiful daughter and an excellent housewife. In her noble reply to her husband's proposal for Rājyaśrī's marriage, she expressed her sense of the eternal duty of wifely submission and the perennial material love for a daughter far exceeding that of a son. 'Mothers, your Majesty', she said with tearful eyes, 'are to their daughters no more indeed than nurses, useful only in rearing them. In their bestowal the

²¹Vide CT pp. 42-43, 74-77 (panegyric refs. to Harsha), p. 132 (Harsha's daring), pp. 134-62 (affection for his father), pp. 149-54 (affection for his mother), p. 145 (his tribute to Rasāyana), pp. 162-63, 165-68 (affection for his brother), pp. 171-73 (decision to disobey his brother), pp. 188-89, 223-24 (grief for his brother), pp. 175-76 (dawn of his fierce spirit and his thirst for military glory), p. 179 (his grief and wrath), pp. 186-88 (his vow of vengeance

and his proclamation), p. 198 (anecdote of his seal), pp. 224, 240-49, 254-58 (affection for his sister), pp. 65-69 (his reception of Bāṇa). The trans, 'as he had not shown him any favour' follows G. (Ch. II Notes p. 82) correcting CT p. 66. The memory of Harsha's liberality to Bāṇa is preserved by the rhetorician Mammata in his *Kāvyaaprakāśa* (quoted G., Introd. p. xxxiv).

father is the judge. Love for a daughter, however, far, far exceeds love for a son, pity causing the difference.' The great qualities of the Queen's character were shown to their fullest advantage on the occasion of her husband's fatal illness. It was in consonance with her deep conjugal affection that she was found by Harsha "seated at the King's side, and touching him on head and breast, her eyes swollen with ceaseless weeping, fanning him and crying again and again, 'My lord, are you asleep?'. When all hope of her husband's recovery was over, Yaśovati resolved to offer that supreme proof of wifely devotion that has so often adorned the annals of womanhood in this country *viz.*, self-immolation in the burning flame. The scene that followed was one of as sublime a sacrifice as has ever been recorded in the annals of history. As the Queen issued forth from her apartments on her fatal journey, she held a picture of her husband in her hand 'as steadfast as her heart, where he dwelt, was fixed on death.' Lovingly she clasped her lord's spear-shaft; before his umbrella, she shed tears as a kinsman; the roars of the caged lions took her heart captive, resembling, as they did, her husband's utterance. With her mind fixed on death, she bade tender farewell even to the King's favourite hounds, the domestic birds and the very trees about the palace. But her awful resolve was soon to be subjected to a more strenuous test. At the sight of her 'youngest and dearest son' who at this moment flung himself at her feet with a piteous cry, she could no longer restrain her pent-up feelings. With bosom heaving convulsively, throat choked with sobs, and lips quivering with agony, she closed her eyes and let flow a torrent of tears. Then 'like some mean woman' she uttered a long and loud lament. With anguished heart she 'recalled to mind from the day of the Prince's birth all the childish years when he lay in her bosom.' As her thoughts recurred to home and kin, she addressed beseechingly her parents, cried to her dear elder son far away and lamented her daughter now settled in her father-in-law's house. In true feminine fashion she ended by reproaching fate and her unfortunate self. But this first outburst of grief so characteristic of her womanly nature immediately gave way to a supreme sense of duty indicative of her heroic spirit. With circumstantial detail the author tells us how the Queen, after lovingly raising her son and wiping his streaming eyes, deliberately wiped her own tears, arranged her tresses, replaced her upper garment, washed her beautiful face and wiped her hands. Then looking intently at her son, she addressed him in words that deserve to live as one of the most splendid specimens of heroic utterance in our literature. She begins by reminding the Prince that her love for her son, great as it is, must give way to her duty to her husband. 'It is not, dear, that you are unloved, without noble qualities or deserving to be abandoned. With my very bosom's milk you drank up my heart. If at this hour my regard is not towards you, it is that my lord's great condescension comes between us.' Next to her husband she owes a duty to her family. In words worthy of a great queen, she says, 'I am the lady

of a great house, born of a stainless ancestry, one whose virtue is her dower. Have you forgotten that I am the lioness-mate of a great spirit who like a lion had his delight in a hundred battles. Daughter, spouse, mother of heroes, how otherwise could such a woman as I, whose price was valour, act?" Proudly she recalls how she has had her fill of earthly greatness. 'This hand had been clasped by even such a hero, thy father, a chief among Princes . . . Upon this head have the subser-vient wives of countless feudatories poured coronation water from golden ewers. This forehead, in wearing the honourable fillet of the chief queen, has enjoyed a thing scarce accessible to desire. These breasts have worn robes swayed by the wind of chowries waved by captive wives of foes; they have been sucked by sons like you. Upon the heads of rival wives have these feet been set; they have been adorned with diamond-wreaths of diadems by the bending matrons of the whole capital'. Proceeding, the queen describes in burning language the misery of surviving her husband and the duty, even the glory, of dying while still unwidowed. 'I cannot endure to make unavailing lamentations for a burnt husband. Going before, like the dust of your father's feet, to announce his coming to the heavens, I shall be high esteemed of the hero-loving spouses of the gods. . . Not to die, but to live at such a time would be unfeeling.' Clinching her speech with the resolute words, 'Not in the body, dear son, but in the glory of loyal widows would I abide on earth,' she appealed to her son not to oppose her heart's desire. The closing scene summed up by the author in two sentences of concentrated pathos shows how even the iron stoicism of the Queen was blended at the last moment with a feminine touch. "Having embraced her son and kissed his head, the Queen went forth on foot from the women's quarter" and amid the citizens' lamentations proceeded to the Sarasvatī's bank. Then looking at the fire with a woman's timorous glances, she plunged into it 'as the moon's form enters the adorable sun'.²²

If Yaśovati is a historical example of the class of heroic women who have from time to time adorned the annals of our ancient land, her daughter Rājyaśrī is a specimen of its eternal type of tender womanhood. Married at the approach of womanhood to a bridegroom approved by her parents, she betrayed in the bridal chamber all the mingled feelings of bashfulness, alarm and grief usual on such occasions. The calamities which subsequently befell her—the slaying of her husband and her own cruel imprisonment—were such as were unknown to her more fortunate mother. It was not, however, the spirit of heroic sacrifice but sheer despair that drove her ultimately to prepare for her self-immolation. Having been sent away from the capital through the action of a noble

²² Vide CT pp. 102-04 (formal ref. to Yaśovati); *ibid* pp. 106, 109 (ref. to Yaśovati as wife and daughter); *ibid* p. 141 (Yaśovati at her husband's bedside); *ibid* pp. 151-55 (Yaśovati's self-

immolation). The touching reference to the Queen's parents in her parting address to her son quoted above is noteworthy.

called Gupta, as Bāṇa tells us in his summary of the Princess's misfortunes, she heard the news of her brother's death and refused to take food. Then 'faint from want of food she wandered miserably in the Vindhya forest and at last in her despair resolved to mount the funeral pyre.' This note of despair is also struck in the description of her condition by Rājyaśrī's lady-in-waiting, as she was preparing for her tragic end. As the venerable lady declared to the young Buddhist mendicant who had been attracted to the spot by the women's cries, 'This our mistress, being helpless through the death of her father and disappearance of all her other relatives, in her excessive tenderness of heart and childless desolation . . . is now entering into the fire.' When Harsha arrived in the nick of time to save her from a horrible death, the flood of tears that burst from her eyes testified to her warm affection for her long sought-for and just recovered brother, while the readiness with which she allowed herself to be led away from the fire by Harsha proved her dutiful submission. We have another glimpse immediately afterwards into the tenderness of her nature in the statement that tears again filled her eyes at the sudden shock of the news that the Buddhist teacher had known her husband. When at length she again addressed her brother, the manner and matter of her speaking reflected once more her gentle nature. 'Sire', said the attendant through whom the Princess conveyed her request 'in a whisper', 'the Queen bids me say that she never remembers to have uttered before a loud remark in your Highness's presence, far less a command'. But her misfortunes made her forget her due respect. 'A husband and a son,' she explained in language bespeaking the eternal type of India's womanhood, 'is a woman's true support; but to those who are deprived of both, it is immodesty even to continue to live as mere fuel for the fire of misery.' As she had given up her resolution to die owing to the opportune arrival of her brother, she now begged his permission to assume the red robe of a Buddhist nun. Needless to say, she willingly acquiesced when Harsha arranged to take her and the Buddhist teacher along with him and returned to his camp along the Ganges banks.²³

If the Kings, the Queen and the Princess of the Royal House of Pushpabhūti are presented before us in all their admirable aspects, its most implacable adversaries, the Kings of Malwa and Gauda, are painted by the author in the blackest colours. Introducing to the two Princes Rājyavardhana and Harsha the terrible news of the slaying of Grahavarman and barbarous imprisonment of his Queen by 'the wicked lord of Malwa,' the messenger says, 'It is the way of the vile, like fiends, to strike where they find an opening.' If Bāṇa is to be believed, the Malwa King was as faint-hearted in fight as he was adept in villainy. The Malwa army, it was reported to Harsha, was defeated 'with ridi-

²³ CT pp. 130-31 (Rājyaśrī at her bridal chamber); ibid pp. 250-51 (Rājyaśrī's resolve); ibid pp. 244-45 (address of

her lady-in-waiting); ibid pp. 249-50, 254 (Rājyaśrī in presence of her brother).

culous ease' by Rājyavardhana, and a list of the booty captured by the latter was afterwards displayed by Bhaṇḍi to Harsha.

The character of the King of Gauḍa, the other formidable enemy of the Pushpabhuṭi line (who has been identified with Śaśaṅka, King of Kārṇasuvarṇa in Hieun Tsang's contemporary account) is again and again referred to by Bāṇa with the utmost abhorrence. Harsha himself, in the first outburst of his grief and indignation, is said to have exclaimed that the slaying of such a noble and heroic soul, at the very moment when he had laid aside his sword, was an act of infamy of which only 'that ignoble wretch' was capable. The Prince goes on to say that he forbears even to mention the miscreant's name for fear of soiling his tongue with a smirch of sin. In his speech following Harsha's utterance to which reference has been made above, General Simhanāda ridiculed the folly of the knavish Gauḍa King in rousing the vengeance of Harsha, and he urged his master to take up arms immediately for the destruction of 'this meanest of the Gauḍas.' Accepting his advice with enthusiasm, Harsha declared that he was ashamed even to cry out helplessly so long as 'this vile outcast of a Gauḍa King, this world-condemned miscreant, survives, like a cruel thorn in my heart.' He followed this up with the terrible vow, to which reference has been made elsewhere, for clearing this earth of Gauḍas within a limited number of days.²⁴

Among the Princes in immediate attendance on Rājyavardhana and Harsha, Bāṇa makes frequent reference to their cousin Bhaṇḍi, who seems to have been the most zealous of their faithful servants. While Harsha was riding by forced marches to attend his dying father's bedside at the capital, Bhaṇḍi was one of those young nobles who repeatedly, but in vain, tried to make him take food. At the tragic meeting between Prabhākaravardhana and his dearly beloved son, it was Bhaṇḍi who explained to the anxious King that the Prince had taken no food for three days. In the grave crisis overtaking the Royal House after Prabhākaravardhana's death, it was Bhaṇḍi whom Rājyavardhana selected to accompany him in the campaign against the King of Malwa. After Rājyavardhana had been done to death by the Gauḍa King, Bhaṇḍi reached Harsha's camp with the spoils of the luckless King's victory over the Malwa army. The pathetic scenes following the meeting between the cousins, to which reference will be made elsewhere, testify to Bhaṇḍi's affectionate regard for his late master. Immediately afterwards Harsha

²⁴ CT p. 173 (villainy of Malwa king); ibid pp. 178, 225 (his cowardice); ibid pp. 179-80 (wickedness of Gauḍa king); ibid pp. 182-87 (his folly and wickedness). The story of Śaśaṅka's treacherous murder of Rājyavardhana, agreeing in the main with the other contemporary account of Hieun Tsang, was generally accepted hitherto as authentic. But good reasons have recently been given for

doubting the genuineness of this account. (Vide *History of Bengal* published by the Dacca University, 1943, App. II pp. 71-76). It is moreover a demonstrated fact that Harsha in spite of his famous vow failed to win any permanent success against Śaśaṅka (Vide *op. cit* pp. 64-66, 68). This proves that Bāṇa's low estimate of the latter's character had not enough basis in fact.

himself started for the Vindhya for the rescue of his sister, leaving the trusted Bhaṇḍi to continue the advance against the Gaudas.

Although Bāṇa's references to the Princes Kumāragupta and Mādhavagupta, the two sons of the Malwa King, are less frequent, they seem to have been very trusted and faithful followers of the King. At the first audience given by Harsha to Bāṇa, the King spoke his mind to one of them sitting behind who is described as his favourite. When Harsha proceeded to the Vindhya hermitage of Divākaramitra the Buddhist teacher, he is expressly stated to have been attended by Mādhavagupta.²⁵

Coming to the great officers of state, we have welcome glimpses into the characters of only two of them, namely General Simhanāda and the elephant-commander Skandagupta. In the crisis following Rājyavardhana's murder, they took advantage of their age and experience to impress their precious advice upon the youthful Harsha. The General, who is described as a friend of Harsha's father and a veteran of many wars, made a highly characteristic speech. He began by exposing the folly of 'the wretch', the Gauda king, who had dared to risk the vengeance of Harsha. He extolled in general terms the greatness of heroes to whom the giving and suffering of wounds in battle out-weighed the regard for their own bodies. Addressing the King with reference to the immediate situation, the impetuous general finally asked him to embark upon a course of universal conquest for his own glory and for the protection of his people. 'Think not of the Gauda King alone; so deal that for the future no other follow his example... Relinquishing the grief proper to cowards, appropriate, as the lion a fawn, the royal glory which is your heritage. You are, in the cataclysm which has come to pass, the only Śeṣha left to support the earth... My lord's body baked in the flame of humiliation cannot, without the cool application of crimson sandal-unguent of foes, be relieved of this dire fever of pain.'

If Simhanāda in his fiery address sounded a trumpet-call to battle and conquest, Skandagupta's advice was one of caution against overconfidence. It was justified not only by the recent fate of Rājyavardhana but also by reference to a large number of curious historical instances. 'Dismiss therefore,' such were the speaker's cautious words, 'this universal confidingness so agreeable to the habits of your own land and springing from innate frankness of spirit.'

Among other courtiers mentioned by Bāṇa, the figure of the young physician Rasāyana, who attended Prabhākaravardhana in his last illness, is very attractive. He is introduced to us as a young doctor holding a hereditary position in the Royal Household. Though only about eighteen years of age, he had mastered all the eight branches of Āyurveda and was perfectly familiar with the diagnosis of disease. While all the other physicians comforted Prince Harsha with hopes of the King's

²⁵ CT pp. 135, 142, 175, 223-24 (refs. to Bhaṇḍi); *ibid* pp. 66, 235 (refs. to sons

of Malwa king).

speedy recovery, Rasāyana stood silent with downcast looks. Pressed by the Prince to state the facts of the King's case, Rasāyana committed suicide by throwing himself into the flames to avoid breaking the unwelcome news to his youthful master. The high eulogy which the Prince pronounced upon him may be regarded as a fitting tribute to his rare nobility of soul and love for his patron.

We may refer, in the next place, to Bāṇa's pleasing picture of the conduct of the courtiers after Prabhākaravardhana's death—a picture which, though drawn in general outline, must have been based upon a substratum of truth. On the next day after the King's death, as Bāṇa tells us, the King's favourite servants, remembering the many virtues of their departed master, abandoned their wives and children. 'Some consigned themselves to precipices, some stationed themselves at holy fords in the neighbourhood. Some spread couches of grass and quieted their great sorrow by abstinence from food; some plunged like moths into the flame. Some took vows of silence and sought refuge on the mount of snows, some lay on couches of twigs along the Vindhya slopes . . . Some assumed red robes, some bound the ascetic's knot upon their heads and made Śiva their refuge. Others reached old age in sylvan hermitages, others, finally, took vows and roamed as shaven monks.'²⁶

We shall close this subject with Bāṇa's estimate of two renowned ascetics, viz. the Śivite saint Bhairavāchārya and the Buddhist teacher Divākaramitra. As drawn by Bāṇa's master-hand, they are shown to resemble each other in being friends and confidants of kings, but to differ in almost every other respect. As regards Bhairavāchārya, the realistic traits of his character are well brought out in the episode of his relationship with king Pushpabhūti. Coming to the capital of the devout Śiva King, he was immediately received with the highest honours. Bhairavāchārya's success at court was due as much to his shrewdness and worldly wisdom as to the fame of his wondrous powers. While reporting his arrival to the king and on each subsequent visit, he presented to Pushpabhūti through his faithful disciple Ṭīṭibha five silver lotuses. On one occasion he went a step further and presented a wonderful sword which, as he gravely assured the King, had been acquired from a *Brahmarākshasa* (scil. the ghost of a wicked Brāhmaṇa) by his Brāhmaṇa disciple Pātālasvāmin. When the King proceeded to visit Bhairavāchārya, the saint offered his distinguished guest the high honour of his own seat, which the King of course politely declined. Further the saint, while declaring his indifference to riches from his very birth, modestly offered to the King the gift of his 'few hard-won syllables of knowledge' and his small store of merit acquired by humble service of the holy

²⁶ CT pp. 182-88 (General Sirṁhanāda).
Ibid pp. 191-94 (elephant-commander Skandagupta). Ibid pp. 144-45 (physician Rasāyana). Ibid p. 161 (mournings of courtiers). The position of the

youthful Harsha at this moment in relation to the two officers first mentioned reminds one of that of the young Akbar at his accession with regard to Bairam Khan.

Master Śiva. Returning the King's visit, Bhairavāchārya displayed his indifference to wealth and power by politely turning down the King's offer of himself, his harem, his court, and his treasury. When the King's confidence had been fully won, Bhairavāchārya secretly sought and immediately obtained the help for which he had evidently come all the way from his Southern home. In words bespeaking his single-minded zeal for his own salvation, Bhairavāchārya told the King that he had, by a crore of muttered prayers and wearing black garlands, clothes and unguents, performed in the great cremation-ground 'the exordium of the potent rite called *Mahākālahridaya*'. The completion of this rite by laying a goblin could only be performed with the King's assistance supplementing that of the teacher's three disciples. At the ensuing ceremony the King, armed with sword and dagger, protected one quarter, while the other quarters were guarded by the teacher's three disciples equally well-armed. Entering 'the cage composed of their arms,' the teacher proceeded with his awful ceremony. If we are to believe the author, Bhairavāchārya's prescience was fully justified by the result. For though the opposing fiends were allayed after a fruitless resistance, the Nāga deity of the region who burst forth from an underground chasm to challenge the participants, could only be subdued by the King's prowess. The teacher's parting words to the King, on attaining the coveted position of a Vidyādhara, were those of gratitude for Pushpabhūti's unselfish help and remorse for his own selfishness.

The three disciples who are described as participating in the saint's final rite are likewise presented to us with marked individuality of character. We may take them to be historical examples of the type of Śivite mendicants, half-monk half-warrior, whom India has known from early times. One of them, Ṭīṭibha, is described as wearing the garb of an ordinary mendicant at the time of his first visit to the King. In striking contrast with this description is the picture of Ṭīṭibha and his two associates, as they appeared when proceeding at dead of night to the great cremation-ground for assisting the teacher's performance of his dread rite. Bathed and garlanded, they wore on their heads turban-wraps that were tied up in the form of a mystic *Svastika*. Wearing dazzling earrings and thick new clothes girt with golden chain-belts, they brandished their sharp swords while daggers were fastened to their waists and bucklers with star-like silver knobs were carried for their protection. In the ensuing ceremony they bore a manful share in fighting the formidable Nāga deity of the realm. The career of these ascetics, after the departure of their master, is characteristic of their double nature. While Ṭīṭibha, despite the King's remonstrances returned to the woods, his two companions, who were men of war-like spirit, remained in the King's service and lived to occupy the front rank in battle and enjoy the highest honour.

If Bhairavāchārya is presented before our eyes as an historical example of the type of hard cold Brahmanical ascetics known to our land from

ancient times, Divākaramitra represents the class of universally compassionate Buddhist saints unhappily lost to us for a long time. When Harsha approached Divākaramitra's hermitage, the saint, impressed simply with his visitor's extraordinary dignity and courtesy and actuated by his own natural kindness, received the King with such high honours as to elicit the latter's highest praise. Impressed still more by his visitor's courteous refusal to share his own seat, the saint offered the King with remarkable modesty, as coming from a great teacher, the gift of his 'few drops of learning' which formed his sole possession. When the King reached his sister's side just in time to save her from self-immolation on the funeral pyre, he introduced Divākaramitra to her as her dead 'husband's second heart and our *guru*.' How nobly Divākaramitra, who had meanwhile learnt the rank of his guest, fulfilled the *guru's* rôle was proved by his whole subsequent conduct. When the Princess, reminded of her husband, broke forth into a fresh fit of weeping, 'the holy man, who felt that his stoical calmness was threatened by the tears which gathered in his own eyes, turned away his eyes for a while and heaved a long sigh.' The silent sympathy, which does honour to the teacher's heart, was presently changed into a mild call to duty. Speaking tenderly in a gentle voice, Divākaramitra reminded the King that the rites of ablution had not yet been performed. When the King complied with his request, the teacher with his wonted courtesy allowed some time to elapse for the brother to soothe the sister's feelings. He then presented to the King a pearlwreath of avowedly miraculous origin which had come into his hands by the regular succession of pupilhood. The wreath being reputed to be an antidote against all poisons, the teacher justified its presentation to the King, 'as you are ever engaged in helping all living beings' and 'as your life deserves to be well guarded'. The teacher's services were presently to be requisitioned for a more urgent occasion. When Queen Rājyaśrī expressed her desire to assume the red robe of the Buddhist nun, the King remained silent. But the teacher, after addressing her his words of comfort, asked her to abide by the decision of her brother. 'Whether thou regardest him as a brother, as an elder, as one beloved, or as a virtuous man, or as a King—thou must in any case obey his decree.' When the King after commending the teacher's wisdom, asked that from that day forth the Princess 'should remain at my side and be comforted with your righteous discourses and your passionless instructions and your advice,' Divākaramitra at once complied with the request with his characteristic self-renunciation. The King, well pleased, took his sister with the holy man and went back in a few marches to his camp stationed along the Ganges banks.²⁷

²⁷ CT pp. 86-99 (refs. to Bhairavāchārya and his three disciples); *ibid* p. 137f

(ref to Divākaramitra).

Bāṇa's style

The author of the *Harshacharita* and the *Kādambarī* is admittedly the greatest master of classical Sanskrit prose. If prose, as has been observed by a Sanskrit rhetorician, is "the touch-stone of poetry", we know of no other Sanskrit poet who approaches his level. He has, to begin with, a perfect command of all the figures of speech approved by the rhetoricians, and, according to a leading authority, reveals in long compounds constituting the quality of vigour and forming the very life of prose.²⁸ His style, however, especially in his imaginary dialogues, is naturally simple and graceful as well as terse and vigorous. Among the sentiments (*rasas*) celebrated in the works on rhetoric, that of pathos comes out conspicuously in his works. We have found instances of this kind in his description of the scenes following Harsha's meetings with his dying father and his heroic mother just on the eve of her terrible self-sacrifice, and to a slighter extent in the story of his meeting Prince Bhaṇḍi after the latter's return with the spoils of Rājyavardhana's victorious campaign. Another such instance is furnished by the author's description (to which reference has been made above) of the scene following Rājyavardhana's arrival at the capital after his father's death. As soon as Harsha heard the news of his brother's coming, he "all but poured out his life along with a gushing torrent of tears". Presently the elder Prince appeared in sight, his body covered with bandages for wounds received in the war with the Hūṇas, his limbs emaciated by grief, his whole aspect bearing the sign of extreme prostration. As Harsha rose somehow to meet him, he extended his long stout arms and "clapped his brother's neck in abandonment of grief, and drawing him now to his own worn unshawled bosom, now to his neck, now to his shoulder, now to his cheek, sobbed with such violence that their hearts were almost uprooted with their moorings." It was long before the elder Prince's tears ceased to flow. Calming himself after a while he proceeded to the bath-house. Then roughly wringing his unadorned locks of dishevelled hair he flung himself on a couch in the courtyard terrace and remained there without uttering a word. Stretching his form on a carpet laid on the ground and glancing at his brother over and over again, Harsha "felt his heart almost split into a thousand parts". To the people that day was terrible even beyond the day of the king's death. Throughout the city none cooked, none bathed, none ate, in every quarter there was no man but wept. At length when the day wore into night amid fearful and prophetic portents (to be described below), the Prince could be persuaded only with difficulty to take food. Next morning in the presence of the assembled kings Rājyavardhana, as mentioned above, announced his astounding resolution to retire to a hermitage, and Harsha, taken aback at his brother's decision, decided silently to follow suit. The pathos now

²⁸ Vide Vāmana's *Kāvya-lāriṅkārasūtra-vṛitti* (quoting the text *gadyaṁ kavīnām*

nikashaṁ vadanti); Mammaṭa's *Kāvya-prakāśa* I 80 (value of long compounds).

reached its climax. By this, as the author says, the weeping Keeper of the Robes had provided bark dresses, as previously ordered. The women of the royal household were screaming and beating their breasts, Brāhmaṇas with uplifted arms were wailing aloud. With doleful cries a group of citizens was engaged in bending before the prince's feet. Ancient servants with their hearts melting were flying away. Aged kinsmen leaning on servants were entering with trembling forms, disordered apparel, grief-choked voices and minds bent on remonstrance. Despondent feudatories were sighing as lying prostrate they marked the jewelled pavements with their nails. How a completely different turn was given to the course of events by the sudden and dramatic arrival of a messenger with the dreadful news of the murder of Grahavarman and the imprisonment of Rājyaśrī by 'the wicked lord of Malwa' has been told in another place.

Still another instance of the author's mastery of pathos is exhibited in his description of the scene following Harsha's meeting with Rājyaśrī, in the depths of the Vindhya forest, which has been referred to elsewhere. As the king was being shown the road by a Buddhist monk, he heard from between the trees lamentations of the crowd of Rājyaśrī's female attendants mourning the approaching end of their mistress. The king hurrying up saw his sister fainting as she prepared to enter the funeral pyre. Full of agitation, he pressed her forehead with his hand as she lay with closed eyes in her swoon. At the reviving touch of her dear brother's hand, she instantly opened her eyes. Claspings the neck of her brother thus unexpectedly restored to her, she cried out amid a flood of tears, 'O father, O mother, O friends'. Meanwhile her brother, in trying to comfort her, covered her mouth with his hands, and kept calling out in a loud voice, 'O my child, be firm.' But the Princess wept violently for a long time with a loud outburst of grief. When the vehemence of her emotion was spent, she allowed her brother to lead her away from the fire. The king first washed his sister's eyes, which were flushed from her continual weeping, and then washed his own. Then he turned and speaking gently to his sister introduced the Buddhist teacher as "your husband's second heart and our *guru*." At the sudden shock of the news that he had known her husband, the Princess's eyes were again filled with tears, while the holy man turned away his eyes to keep back his own tears and heaved a long sigh.

In a few instances the effects of pathos are unfortunately marred by Bāṇa's indulgence in a mannerism of style peculiar to the authors of *kāvya*s. This consists in the use of a series of short exclamations assuming the form of jingling alliterative phrases addressed to (or by) female attendants of the hero (or heroine) at a time of extreme anguish. Take, for example, Bāṇa's description of the dying Prabhākara-vardhana's cries to his female attendants, which in the original consists of a series of alliterative exclamations corresponding to the proper names of the persons addressed. A similar exhibition of pedantry vitiates the author's

narration of the woes of the queens headed by Yaśovati when proceeding to mount the funeral pyre. The same defect characterises Bāṇa's otherwise pathetic picture of the Princess Rājyaśrī's anguish as she was preparing to mount the pyre.²⁹

Along with the sentiment of pathos (*karuṇa*), the other sentiments included by Sanskrit rhetoricians in their well-known category of eight *rasas* are exemplified in Bāṇa's work. We have a remarkable blending of the sentiments called furious (*rudra*), heroic (*vīra*), terrible (*bhayānaka*), odious (*vibhatsa*) and marvellous (*adbhuta*) in the author's above-mentioned story of King Pushpabhūti's nocturnal vigil with the Śaiva saint Bhairavāchārya and his three disciples at the cemetery, of the king's successful encounter with a fierce *nāga* deity springing miraculously out of the earth, and of the equally miraculous appearance of the goddess Lakshmi for the purpose of conferring a boon upon the king. Forceful illustrations of the heroic sentiment are found likewise in the author's accounts given above of Rājyavardhana's sudden paroxysm of wrath at the news of the murder of his brother-in-law and imprisonment of his sister, and the equally passionate outburst of Harsha's wrath on hearing the news of the treacherous murder of his dearly beloved brother. Of the erotic sentiment we have an example in the author's brief reference to the feelings of the newly wedded Princess Rājyaśrī in her bridal chamber in the night-time. We have an illustration of the author's quaint humour in the course of his description of the elephant-commander Sakandagupta above mentioned, where he refers to this worthy's straight nose which was as long as his sovereign's pedigree.

Bāṇa's frequent use of imaginary dialogues, which is in accordance with the epic and *kāvya* tradition, besides helping to vary the monotony of the narratives, leads a personal and indeed dramatic touch to his descriptions. Take, e.g., the animating address of Prabhākaravardhana to his sons when introducing the Malwa Princes as their future attendants and that of the same king on his death-bed when addressing his beloved son Harsha. Take, again, the heroic speech of Queen Yaśovati when urging her son not to oppose her "heart's desire" for her self-immolation. Witness, again, the pathetic speech of Rājyavardhana to his brother when conveying his resolve to retire to a hermitage and the passionate cry of the same king when his grief gave way to a fierce thirst for vengeance against the lord of Malwa. Instances of the same kind are the fiery speech of General Simhanāda and the cautious address of Skandagupta to Harsha on the eve of his campaign against the Gaudas.

In some instances Bāṇa uses the device of self-reflection of his characters

²⁹ CT pp. 165-75 (scene following Rājyavardhana's arrival at the capital), *ibid* pp. 246-50 (scenes attending Harsha's meeting with Rājyaśrī, *ibid* pp. 144-45 (Prabhākaravardhana's cries at his death-bed), *ibid* pp. 149-50 (woes of Yaśovati's attendants), *ibid* pp. 247-

48 (Rājyaśrī's anguish). Cf. Subandhu's *Vāsavadattā* pp. 156-57 (exclamations of the Princess when pining for her beloved) and pp. 226-33 (exclamations of the Princess's maids overheard by Prince Kandarpaketu).

to analyse their feelings and sentiments in deciding upon definite steps in their career. To take one instance, Bāṇa's own account of his self-musing before deciding to visit Harsha's court includes an admirable summary of the possible objections against taking this step. With an eye to the independence he had hitherto enjoyed, he first thinks, 'all service is hateful, and attendance is full of evils and a court is full of dangers'. Scrutinizing successively all the causes of success at court—ancestral connexion, remembrance of former benefits, affection caused by service rendered when a child, family dignity and so forth—Bāṇa finds that he can claim none of them as his own. Nevertheless he makes up his mind to go to court, leaving his household in charge of the family deity Śiva. Similarly Harsha before deciding to visit Divākaramitra, to which fortunate circumstances he was to owe his timely rescue of his sister from a horrible death, mused upon his prospective happiness in meeting the friend of his deceased brother-in-law, who was at once a religious ascetic and a good and wise man. In some instances self-reflection serves as a dramatic device to prepare us for the coming catastrophe. Such, e.g., is the case with Harsha's musings apprehending (what indeed proved to be prophetic) that his brother would in the excess of grief for his departed father renounce the sovereignty and retire to a hermitage. Elsewhere, as in the case of Harsha's reflection on the self-sacrifice of the physician Rasāyana, the author uses the device of soliloquy to record his appreciation of a heroic character.³⁰

With Bāṇa's close powers of observation and mastery of style he could not but enrich his work with a large number and variety of gnomic sayings (*subhāshitas*) of the type so well known to our ancient literature. We can select only a few by way of illustration. In a well-known passage which is put into the thought of Prince Harsha when silently remonstrating against his brother's decision to retire to a hermitage, we are told:— 'A Prince without pride, a Brāhmaṇa without greed, a sage without anger, an ape without tricks, a poet without envy, a merchant without knavery, a fond husband without jealousy, a good man free from poverty, a rich man without harshness, a poor man not an eye-sore, a hunter without cruelty, a religious mendicant who is as good as a Brāhmaṇa, a contented servant, a grateful gambler, a wandering ascetic who is not desirous of food, a cruel man with a soft tongue, a faithful minister and a king's son not arrogant, are equally hard to find.' Elsewhere we have a long description brimming over with highly realistic touches and no doubt drawn from life, of the woes of a courtier, which is somewhat incongruously put into the mouth of the messenger of the king of Prāgyotisha. It closes, aptly enough, with the epigram, 'Better for a manly man is a moment of manliness: at the price of bowing, the wise deem not even the joy of a world-sovereignty worth a bow.'³¹

³⁰ CT pp 43-44 (Bāṇa's self-musings);
ibid pp. 145, 162-63, 233 (Harsha's
reflections).

³¹ CT pp. 171-72 with corr. in G. Ch. VI
Notes pp. 224-25 (Harsha's list of
specified social types); ibid pp. 219-23

Critical estimate of Bāṇa as a chronicler

In attempting a critical estimate of Bāṇa's work it is well to remember at the outset that it is a contemporary chronicle of a great king in Northern India, based upon first-hand knowledge of its author, who by virtue of his favoured position at court enjoyed exceptional opportunities for acquainting himself with the true course of events. Indirect evidence of its authentic character is furnished by the fact that frequently the statements in the *Harshacharita* are confirmed by independent contemporary evidence. Thus the remarkable religious eclecticism attributed to the Royal House by Bāṇa, who describes Pushpabhūti as a passionate devotee of Śiva and Prabhākara-vardhana as that of the Sun, is confirmed by the epithets *paramādityabhakta*, *parama*, *saugata* and *paramamāheśvara* applied to Prabhākara-vardhana, Rājyavardhana and Harsha himself, in Madhuban and Banskhera inscriptions of the last-named king. 'The wicked lord of Malwa', who according to Bāṇa killed Grahavarman of Kanauj and was subsequently defeated with 'ridiculous ease' by Rājyavardhana has been identified with Devagupta of Harsha's inscriptions above mentioned. Bāṇa's vague account of the treacherous murder of Rājyavardhana by the king of Gauḍa is corroborated by the equally vague references in Harsha's inscriptions and in the contemporary work of Hiuen Tsang. For these reasons the *Harshacharita* has always been recognised as a high authority on the early history of Harsha's reign and the history of his immediate predecessors. Of the other merits of this work, its unrivalled success in the portraiture of contemporary life and manners, its brilliant characterisation of individual figures and social types, its vivid and powerful description of historical scenes enlivened chiefly with the sentiment of pathos we have spoken above. Although thus ranking as a topmost authority on the life and fortunes of a great Indian King in the centuries heralding the transition from the Ancient to the Mediaeval history of our land, the work of Bāṇa cannot but be charged with serious defects and shortcomings when judged by modern historical standards. The author's references to historical characters and events, to begin with, are sometimes so much vitiated by tricks of style (especially by his use of similes and poetic fancies as well as puns) as to be incapable of a clear explanation. Introducing King Prabhākara-vardhana the author observes, as has been stated before, that he was 'a lion to the Hūṇa deer, a burning fever to the king of Sindhu, a trouble of the sleep of Gurjara, a bilious plague to the scent-elephant the lord of Gandhāra, a robber of the skill of the Lāṭas, an axe to the creeper of the glory of the Mālava king'. Of the same nature are the references put into the mouth of Bāṇa's cousin in a long panegyric account of King Harsha. Here the speaker after explaining how no reign has been stainless except that of Harsha, 'the king of kings and the sover-

(Hamsavega on the woes of a courtier).
For a long list of such *subhāshitas* se-

lected from the *Harshacharita*, vide G.
Part I App. A. and Part II pp. 259-62.

eign of all continents', enumerates punningly the king's many 'marvels'. "In him", we read, "the vanquisher of armies made steady the restless kings who had formed alliances. In him the lord of people extended forgiveness towards a group of remaining kings. In him the best of men obtained for himself glory by destroying the king of the Sindhu country. In him his sovereignty has anointed Kumāra. In him the lord of the world has taken tribute from the inaccessible land of the snow-mountain."³²

If the author's accounts of the wars and conquests of the kings of his hero's line are so obscure, his descriptions of their foreign relations are hardly more satisfactory. Of the marriage arranged by Prabhākara-var dhana between his daughter Rājyaśrī and Prince Grahavarman of the Maukhari line of Kanauj, we are simply told that the king's choice was guided by the fact that the latter stood at the head of all royal houses and was worshipped by all the world. Even in the case of the author's long and detailed account of the mission of Haṁsavega, the envoy of King Bhāskaravarman of Prāgjyotiṣa, the grounds of the alliance sought for by the latter and accepted by the former are stated in characteristically general terms.

In a few passages Bāṇa has been held to have presaged mighty political changes by means of metaphorical references. Take for example the following description of the close of the day of Rājyavardhana's arrival at the capital. At length hued like flesh moistened by a great flow of blood, the sun sank, red as madder, in the waters of the western sea: on the (red) lotus ponds the bee tribes buzzed in distress at the closing of the calyxes: anguished by the grief of their spouses at their approaching separation, a horizon of ruddy-geese fixed a tearful gaze upon the sun's orb: in the firmament the rising clear-flecked moon shone like the pointed hump of Śiva's tamed bull, when blotted with mud scattered by his broad horns. The above, it has been thought, contains several allusions to coming events. The red sun-set is a sign of bloody wars: the separation of the ruddy-geese, of the separation of the brothers: the buzzing bees, of arrows: the rise of the blotted moon, of the rising power of the Gauda king. [The word used for the moon (Saśaṅka) confirms the commentator's statement that this was the Gauda king's name.] To take another example, after Harsha's return to his camp

³² CT p. 101 (Prabhākara-var dhana's victorious wars); *ibid* pp. 75-76 (Harsha's "marvels"). In the above Sindhu has been identified with the Indus-country (CT), and more plausibly, the lower Indus valley (*History and Culture of the Indian people*, Vol. III, *The Classical Age*, p. 98), while Kumāra has been variously taken to mean Harsha's own son (CT p. 76n and Ettinghausen, *Harsa* pp. 104-05), the Malwa Prince Madhavagupta (Tripathi *History of Kanauj*, pp. 104-05), the Malwa King Kumāragupta (A., p. 54) and with far

less justice, Bhāskaravarman, king of Prāgjyotiṣa (C. V. Vaidya, *History of Mediaeval Hindu India*, Vol. I pp. 43-44, Radha Kumud Mookerjee, *Harsha*, p. 44). Lastly, the Himalayan country has been identified with Nepal (CT p. 270 following Bühler in *IA XIX* p. 40, and Vincent Smith, *Early History of India*, p. 354), with the inaccessible regions of the Tukhāras (S. Lévi, *Le Nepal*, Vol. II pp. 145-46, with the reading *Tukhāra* in place of *tushāra*), with Kulu, Kangra and Nepal (A. p. 54).

along the banks of the Ganges, the sun is described by the author in a series of metaphors as setting in a blaze of glory, while the moon is stated in the same fashion to have gradually risen in the heavens. In the above, it has been held, the sunset is described in terms suggesting bloody wars and the fall of Harsha's enemy, followed by the rising of the moon of Harsha's glory.

Equal obscurity hangs over the author's references to the internal administration of King Harsha. Among the high officers of State, Bāṇa mentions by name only the General (*senāpati*) Siṃhanāda and the Minister of Peace and War (*mahāsāndhivigrahika*) Avanti. As regards the King's principles of administration, we have the author's panegyric account in the figure of speech called *parisaṃkhyā*. Under this King, we are told, there were no forged documents, no mutilation of offenders, no quarrels about recovery of debts, no recourse to courts of justice. Characteristically enough, more light is thrown upon the tendencies of the King's administration by the author's vivid account of the incidents of his march against the Gauḍa king which has been quoted above. From the prominent reference to officials in the statements of the crowd of villagers attracted by curiosity to see the King, it may be surmised that the local administration was largely dominated by the trained bureaucracy.³³

A fundamental defect of the author, shared by him with almost all our Ancient Indian chroniclers, is his complete neglect of chronology. Not only is his work completely silent about dates or even about the regnal years of the kings, but his chronological references, wherever they occur, are of the crudest character. To take a few instances, Kṛishṇa's messenger arrives at Bāṇa's village home "one day during a terribly hot season". "The next day" Bāṇa starts on his journey to the court; "on the first day" he arrives at the village Mallakūṭa: "the next day" he crosses the Bhāgīrathī, and "the next day" he arrives at the royal camp. "One day at the fourth watch of the night" Harsha sees the vision of a lion burning in the forest-fire: "on the morrow at noon" he reaches the capital: "at dawn" the next day he hears the news of the physician Rasāyana's suicide: "on the morrow" his mother burns herself on the funeral pyre and his father breathes his last. The astronomical details of Harsha's birth by way of exception are introduced merely for the opportunity of forecasting the future greatness of the king through the mouth of the court-astrologer.³⁴

Bāṇa's neglect of topography is almost as complete as that of chrono-

³³ CT p. 122 (story of Rājyaśrī's marriage), *ibid* pp. 218-19 (story of Haṃsavega's mission), *ibid* pp. 168, 275, A. pp. 116-17 (sunset on the day of Rājyavardhana's arrival). CT p. 260n (sunset after Harsha's return to camp), *ibid* pp. 180, 187 (Siṃhanāda

and Avanti), *ibid* p. 65 (Harsha's internal administration).

³⁴ CT pp. 40, 44-46 (chronology of Bāṇa's visit to royal camp); *ibid* pp. 132-33, 135, 140-56 (chronology of events preceding Prabhākaravardhana's death); *ibid* p. 109 (date of Harsha's birth).

nology. The long description of his hero's ancestral kingdom—the region (*janapada*) Śrīkaṇṭha and the district (*janapadaviśeṣa*) Sthānviśvara—contains glowing accounts of the richness and variety of their crops, their abundance of domestic animals, the spiritual merits of their people, the beauty and grace of their womenkind and so forth. But it is wanting in any references to the topography of the regions concerned. We may next refer to Bāṇa's account mentioned above of his itinerary from his village home to Harsha's camp. Having slowly passed through a grove sacred to the goddess Chaṇḍikā, we are told, he arrived at last at the village Mallakūṭa. Then crossing the holy Bhāgirathī he passed the night in a forest village named Yashṭigrihaka. Finally he arrived at the royal camp which was pitched near Maṇitārā along the Ajiravati river. Still more vague is the author's account of the route followed by Harsha in his march against the king of Gauḍa. The king's starting point, we read, was a temporary temple erected not far from the capital and close to the river Sarasvatī: the king then advanced by ceaseless marches: abruptly hurrying off to the Vindhya forest for the rescue of his sister, he returned thereafter to his camp along the Ganga banks.³⁵

We are in a somewhat better position regarding Bāṇa's references to genealogy. We have seen how the author in the course of his autobiography mentions four generations of his ancestors—a list which is repeated with one omission in his *Kādambarī*. The author likewise traces the ancestry of his hero to the founder of the royal line of Thanesar, Pushpabhūti, although he omits the names of the latter's immediate successors. Similarly the ambassador of the king of Prāggyotisha in his audience with Harsha mentions four generations of his master's ancestors. The list agrees (with slight alterations in the names) with the family genealogy in Bhāskarvarman's own Nidhanpur inscription.³⁶

Turning to Bāṇa's critical horizon, we have to mention how he shares with other writers of *kāvya*s an unquestioned belief in the operation of supernatural forces upon the course of human affairs. We have already referred to his account of the boon granted by the goddess Lakshmi to King Pushpabhūti about the future greatness of the royal line. Of the same nature is the author's faith in the influence of fate upon human affairs. This is exhibited in his account quoted above of Queen Yaśovati's farewell speech to her son as well as of Harsha's self-reflection on being informed of his brother's resolution to retire to a forest hermitage. Reference may be made again to Bāṇa's *naïve* belief (equally shared by him with his countrymen) in the potency of dreams as indications of coming events. How Queen Yaśovati's dream of two shining youths

³⁵ CT pp. 79-83 (description of Śrīkaṇṭha); *ibid* pp. 45-46 (Bāṇa's itinerary from his village home to Harsha's camp); *ibid* pp. 198, 223, 225, 258 (route of Harsha's march). With Bāṇa's description of Śrīkaṇṭha given

above, cf. his equally vague notices of the cities of Vidiśā and Ujjayinī in *Kādambarī*, pp. 50-52.

³⁶ CT pp. 31-32, 100-01, 217 (genealogies of the ancestors of Bāṇa, Harsha and Bhāskaravarman).

along with a maid essaying to enter her womb, was interpreted by the King to presage the birth of three children by favour of god Śiva, has been told in another place. On the other hand Harsha's evil dream of a lion burning in a forest-fire and the lioness hurling herself into the same fire is held to have presaged the death of King Prabhākaravardhana and his queen. Similarly Harsha's vision of "a heaven-kissing pillar of iron broken in pieces" prophesied the tragic death of his brother.³⁷

With the author's unquestioned belief in the efficacy of dreams may be mentioned his equally firm faith in omens and portents. When Harsha alarmed at the news of his father's serious illness started in hot haste for the capital, he was greeted with a number of evil omens such as the deer moving from right to left, a crow facing the sun against its wont and perching on a blighted tree, a naked Jaina mendicant "all lamp-black as it seemed with the collected filth of many days" coming straight against him. If such were the omens greeting the Prince at the time of his hastening to his father's death-bed, they are described as tenfold more evil at the time of the latter's death. Similar evil portents presaged Rājyavardhana's tragic death as well as the approaching doom of the neighbouring kings threatened by Harsha's march.

Bāṇa's naïve faith in omens and portents has its parallel in his references to magical weapons and ornaments. Examples of the latter type are the magic sword *Aṭṭahāsa*, which Bhairavāchārya presented to King Pushpabhūti, and the magic umbrella *Ābhoga*, which was presented to Harsha by the ambassador of the king of Prāgjyotisha, as well as the pearl-wreath *Mandākinī*, of which Divākaramitra made a present to Harsha. With the above may be mentioned Bāṇa's faith in the efficacy of astrology and divination. Of this we have conspicuous examples, in the elaborate description quoted elsewhere, of Harsha's horoscope and prognostication of his future greatness by his bodily marks.³⁸

We may lastly mention a characteristic shared by our author with other ancient chroniclers not only in his own land but in other countries as well, namely, his inability to distinguish legend from history. We shall illustrate this point by a few examples. Tracing the family history of the king of Prāgjyotisha his ambassador tells King Harsha how Naraka, son of Vishṇu by the Earth-goddess, was born in hell, and how he wrested the miraculous umbrella (thereafter preserved in the family as an heir-

³⁷ CT p. 97 (Lakshmi's boon); *ibid* pp. 152, 271 (influence of fate); *ibid* p. 105 (Yaśovati's dream); *ibid* p. 177 (Harsha's vision); *ibid* p. 133 (Harsha's dream). The dream motif is repeated by Bāṇa in *Kādambarī* p. 65. F. Hall (*Vāsavadattā* ed., Introd. pp. 30-31n) aptly refers to a class of works dealing with dreams and their interpretations comprising such compositions as *Svapnādhyāya* of Kavindrakari and the *Svapnachintāmaṇi* of

Jayadeva. For refs. in later royal chronicles cf. *Prithvirājaviṣaya* describing a dream which presaged the birth of the hero of the poem.

³⁸ Vide CT pp. 134-35 (omens seen by Harsha); *ibid* pp. 146-48 (omens at the time of Prabhākaravardhana's murder); *ibid* pp. 176-77 (omens presaging Rājyavardhana's murder); *ibid* pp. 194-96 (omens at the beginning of Harsha's march).

loom) from the god Varuṇa. In the line of this hero were born the successive kings representing the four generations of Bhāskaravarman's ancestors. Tracing his own ancestry Bāṇa gravely begins with a brilliant scene in heaven with God Brahmā engaged in philosophical discussions with the attendant sages, while others were chanting the Vedas. In a fit of anger the irritable sage Durvāsā cursed the divine Sarasvatī to be born on earth. The goddess descending to earth united herself in marriage with the sage Dadhīcha by whom she had a son Sārasvata. How this last became the friend and teacher of Bāṇa's eponymous ancestor Vatsa has been told in another place. Of the miraculous pearl-wreath presented by the Buddhist sage Divākaramitra to Harsha we are told with equal gravity: how the moon's tear-drops falling into the sea were swallowed by the pearl-oysters; how Vāsuki, the snake-king, somehow became possessed of these pearls and made of them a single pearl-wreath which became the antidote against all poisons; how Nāgārjuna, the mendicant, being brought to hell by the Nāgas, received it as a gift from Vāsuki; how returning from hell he presented it to King Sātavāhana; and how in course of time it passed into the sage's hands by the regular succession of pupilhood.³⁹

³⁹ CT pp. 216-17 (legend of Naraka); *ibid* pp. 4-30 (legend of Sārasvata and Vat-

sa); *ibid* pp. 251-52 (legend of pearl-wreath).

CHAPTER V

THE CHRONICLE OF THE KINGS OF KASHMIR

(*Rājatarāṅgiṇī*)

By Kalhaṇa *

THE PRECURSORS OF KALHANA

In the introductory verses of his *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* ('The River of Kings') composed during the years 1148-49 to 1149-50 A.D., the author Kalhaṇa quotes as his sources no less than eleven royal or dynastic chronicles besides the ancient *Nīlamata* ('The Teachings of Nīla'), the most authoritative compendium of Kashmirian hieratic lore. Of these eleven chronicles he mentions (I 11-13, 17-19) five by name. These are (a) Suvrata, the author of an evidently celebrated chronicle of his time, (b) Kshemendra, the author of the *Nṛpāvalī*, (c) Helārāja, distinguished as a *mahāvratin* (or Pāśupata Brāhmaṇa), who composed the *Pārthivāvalī*, (d) Padmamihira and (e) Chhavillākara. In the above list three, namely Suvrata, Padmamihira and Chhavillākara, are still mere names. Of the other two Helārāja was long ago identified by Kielhorn with the Kashmirian author of that name whose commentary on Bhartṛhari's grammatical work, the *Vākyapadiya*, was then known in fragments. In the concluding verses of this work called the *Prakīrṇaprakāśa*, which has since been published separately in complete editions by two Indian scholars, we are told that Helārāja was the son of Bhūtīrāja and was born in the family of Lakshmaṇa, minister of Muktāpīḍa, the illustrious king of Kashmir. This Bhūtīrāja has been identified by one of the editors, Sri Charudeva Sastri, as the father of Indrarāja, whom Abhinavagupta in his *Gītā* commentary acknowledged as his *Guru*. From this it has been plausibly concluded that Helārāja lived in the latter part of the tenth century A.D. Less probable is the view of the other editor, Sri K. Sambasiva Sastri, who places Helārāja in the latter half of the seventh century. The other chronicler Kshemendra was identified long before by Bühler with the polyhistor of that name belonging to the eleventh century A.D., who is chiefly known from his epitomes of Guṇādhya's *Bṛihat-kathā*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Māhābhārata*, as well as his series of satirical poems (the *Samayamāṭṛikā*, the *Deśopa-*

*In the present chapter for the sake of convenience the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* (in its component Books and verses) is quoted in its English version from the work entitled *Kalhaṇa's Rājatarāṅgiṇī translated with an Introduction, Commentary and Appendices* by M. A.

Stein, Vol. I (*Introduction, Books I-VII*), Vol. II (*Book VIII, Notes, Geographical Memoir, Index, Maps*), Westminster 1900 (abbreviated as Stein). The critical edition of this work was published by the same scholar in 1892.

deśa and the *Narmamālā*) on contemporary social types. It remains to mention that some of the older chronicles reached enormous proportions for which they paid the penalty by becoming fragmentary even in Kalhaṇa's time through condensation of their works by the above-named Suvrata (I. 11). This fate seems to have overtaken Helārāja whose work reached the astounding size of twelve thousand verses (I 17), which is nearly one and a half times the volume of Kalhaṇa's own work; for Kalhaṇa (I 18) quotes an opinion from him not directly, but indirectly, through Padmamihira.¹

As regards the literary form of these old chronicles it would appear on general grounds as well as from the specific evidence of Kalhaṇa that they were written in the style of artificial poetry (*kāvya*) which was shown by Bühler² many years ago to go back at least to the second century of the Christian era, and to have been well established in the three following centuries. Kalhaṇa, while freely criticising his predecessors, nowhere claims to have introduced a new style of historical composition. Kalhaṇa, again in his introduction, specifically describes Helārāja's work as a composition of twelve thousand verses, while he expressly characterises Suvrata's and Kshemendra's chronicles as the work of poets.

Let us next turn to the contents of these old chronicles. From one of Kalhaṇa's Introductory verses (I 9-10) where with evident pride he contrasts his own work with that of his predecessors, we learn that many of them contented themselves with what he thought to be the easy task of continuing the earlier contemporary records. In other words these older chronicles partook generally of the nature of a succession of recent historical works.³ Nevertheless we learn from Kalhaṇa's own testimony how some of them at least sought to recover the lost history of their land. For their chronological beginning they apparently relied on a vague tradition that the earliest rulers were contemporaries of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas. A traditional list of fifty-two kings whose names were forgotten, and a continuous series of later kings with their names and traditional reign-periods, were likewise known to them. Out of the former list, as Kalhaṇa tells us (I 17-18; 20), eight names (all of which will be shown later to be semi-mythical) were restored by Helārāja and five others beginning with the historical Aśoka and including the

¹ The identification of Helārāja was first suggested by Kielhorn in *IA* Vol. III p. 285 and that of Kshemendra by Bühler in his *Kashmir Report* 1877. For the identification of Helārāja's ancestry and date vide *Vākya-padiya*, ed. Charudeva Sastri, Lahore 1934, (1st *kāṇḍa*, Skt. Preface, p. 14) and *ibid*, ed. K. Sambasiva Sastri, Trivandrum 1935 (3rd *kāṇḍa*, Preface pp 4-5).

² In the paper entitled *Die indischen Inschriften und das Alter der indischen Kunstpoesie*, 1890 (Eng. trans. by

Prof. Ghate, *IA* Vol. XLII 1913).

³ We have a striking parallel to the above in the fortunes of Kalhaṇa's own chronicle (noticed by Stein, Vol. II p. 373 and *n*. It was continued in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* of Jonarāja (from 1149-50 A.D. to 1459 A.D.), in the *Jaina Rājatarāṅgiṇī* of Śrīvara (from 1459 to 1486 A.D.), in the *Rājāvalipatākā* of Prājyabhaṭṭa (from 1486 to 1513-14 A.D.) and in the continuation of the last work by Śuka (from 1513-14 A.D. to 1587 A.D.).

famous Kushan kings, Kanishka and Huvishka, were recovered by Chhavillākara. Not only did these older chroniclers thus attempt to fill up the gap in the current list of kings, but they also sought to rectify the traditional chronology which contemplated an aggregate of 2268 years for the reign-periods of the fifty-two 'lost' kings and their successors of the so-called Gonandiya dynasty. From Kalhaṇa (I 48-49) we learn that some of them took the Great War of the *Mahābhārata* to have happened at the end of *Dvāpara* and beginning of *Kali* Age. This led them by a process of simple calculation to reject the aggregate of 2268 years mentioned above.

In attempting an estimate of the Kashmir chronicles anterior to the *Rājatarangīnī*, it is well to remember at the outset some of their admitted defects. Kalhaṇa in his Introduction (I 12-13) charges Suvrata, no doubt justly, with pedantry and Kshemendra with consistent carelessness. These chronicles, again, it may safely be surmised, were subject to the characteristic defects of the *kāvya* style of composition—its conventional descriptions, its hazy chronology and topography, its tendency to idealise the heroes and so forth. Nevertheless we cannot deny them the credit of attempting (as we have shown above) to salvage the lost historical tradition as much as possible, and to give a new direction to the traditional chronological datum line. We may further infer from the satirical picture of the class of cruel and rapacious officials (*kāyasthas*) drawn by Kshemendra in some of his poems that some of the old chronicles at any rate were not mere dry-as-dust compilations of royal names and dynastic lists, but contained shrewd judgments on historical characters and types.

KALHANA, THE AUTHOR OF THE RAJATARANGINI

Influences shaping Kalhaṇa's literary composition—Kalhaṇa's relation to his predecessors and his sources

It was left to Kalhaṇa, son of the Kashmirian high official (*Kāshmirika-mahāmātra*) Chaṇpaka, to write the most valuable and comprehensive chronicle of Kashmir which put the works of his predecessors completely into the shade. Born in a Brāhmaṇa family probably at the beginning of the twelfth century, Kalhaṇa acquired high proficiency in the composition of artificial poetry. He was well-versed, as his writings testify, not only in the two well-known historical *kāvyas* preceding his time, the *Harshacharita* of Bāṇa and the *Vikramāṅkacharita* of Bilhaṇa, but also in the Great Epics. The contemporary poet Maṅkha in his *Śrī-kaṇṭhacharita* written shortly before the composition of the *Rājatarangīnī* describes Kalyāṇa (first identified by Stein with Kalhaṇa) as a chief of poets, as one deemed worthy of matching the whole perfection of Bilhaṇa's muse, and lastly, as one who was indefatigable in his devotion

to the stories of the *Mahābhārata* and so forth.⁴ Kalhaṇa's interest in the history of his country was probably stimulated as much by his patriotism and personal tastes as by the example of his predecessors. In the Introductory part of his work (I 25-43) he gives a glowing account of his native land reclaimed out of a lake by Prajāpati Kaśyapa and protected by Nīla, "the lord of all Nāgas," of its sacred river Vitastā, of the most famous of its springs, sacred lakes and other holy places (*tīrthas*). With pardonable pride he dwells on the multiplicity of its *tīrthas* ("In that country there is not a space as large as a grain of sesamum without a *tīrtha*"), on the spirituality of its people ("That country may be conquered by the force of spiritual merits, but not by forces of soldiers,") on the security and comfort of the bathing-places in its rivers, on the mildness of its climate even during summer, and lastly on its abundance of "learning, lofty houses, saffron, icy water and grapes, things that even in heaven are difficult to find." He concludes by extolling his country as the highest in an ascending series commencing with the earth, the northern region and the Himālayas. Along with Kalhaṇa's patriotism went what gives Kalhaṇa his unique position among his fellow-poets, his unequalled interest in the archaeological and historical remains of his native land. In his work he mentions innumerable foundations of towns, temples, *vihāras*, *stūpas*, *agrahāras* and the like not only by the kings but also by the queens, ministers and high officials. To the same antiquarian interest we owe his luminous description of the shrines of Parihāsapura, Pravarapura and other ancient cities. Herein lies, as we shall see later, one of the distinctive excellences of Kalhaṇa as a historian.

Kalhaṇa introduces his work (I 3-5), characteristically enough, with a high praise of poets whose skill surpassing even the stream of nectar confers immortality on their own as well as others' "bodies of glory", whose creative power enables them to place past times before the eyes of men, whose divine intuition is manifested by their capacity to see in their mind's eye the existences they reveal to others. In the same context the author extols (I 46-47) "that naturally sublime craft of poets without whose favour even mighty kings are not remembered," and he says that without true poets the world even in its dreams would not know of the mighty men of old and the universe would be blind.⁵ In truth Kalhaṇa consciously designed his work as a *kāvya* after the model of his illustrious predecessors in the line. In one of his opening verses (I 6) he seems to apologise, on the ground of length of his narra-

⁴ On the poet Kalhaṇa vide *Śrīkaṇṭha-charita*, Ch. XXV, 78-80. Stein in his tr. of *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* (Vol. I, *Introd.*, pp. 6-14), gives a full account of Kalhaṇa's personality, training and early history.

⁵ With Kalhaṇa's estimate of poetry and poets, cf. the following striking verse

of the rhetorician Rudraṭa (*Kāvya-lamkāra*, I 5):—"When in course of time the temples etc. erected by the kings are fallen into decay, then even the names (of the kings) would not remain if the kings had no good poets."

tive, for the absence of amplified descriptions of different kinds as required by the rules of rhetoric (*alaṅkāraśāstra*). Nevertheless he not seldom exhibits his skill in embellishments of style like simile (*upamā*), poetic fancy (*utprekshā*) and paronomasia (*ślesha*). We find him occasionally indulging in conventional descriptions in the orthodox *kāvya* fashion. How well he expresses the different sentiments (*rasas*), which according to the rhetorician Udbhaṭa constitute the soul of poetry, will be shown in the sequel. But although sharing in the literary form of the older chronicles, Kalhaṇa's work was distinguished from the first by his conception of its wider scope and his vastly enlarged source-material. Kalhaṇa's predecessors had been content with what seemed to him to be the easy task of supplementing the narratives of earlier authors describing contemporary reigns. To Kalhaṇa fell the more difficult task of giving a connected account where the narrative had become fragmentary. In the accounts of the older authors the statements of date and reign of the kings were often doubtful. It was Kalhaṇa's object to correct the errors and restore certainty to the confused narrative. In the pursuit of these aims Kalhaṇa was led in the first place to assess the worth of the older chroniclers. Suvrata's poem, he says, though a successful summary of the older extensive chronicles and famous on that account, suffers from 'misplaced learning': Kshemendra's poem, though the work of a poet, has no single part free from mistakes. In the next place Kalhaṇa was led to utilise not only the eleven older chronicles and the *Nilamata* as aforesaid, but also a group of four additional sources. These consisted of (1) inscriptions recording the consecration of temples (*pratishṭhāśāsanas*), (2) those recording grants of land etc. (*vāstuśāsanas*), (3) laudatory inscriptions (*prāśastipāṭṭas*) and (4) written texts (*śāstras*). From the first source Kalhaṇa doubtless obtained much of his detailed and exact data about the foundations of temples and other sacred buildings, the consecration of images and so forth. The second source (of which a specific instance is quoted in V 397-98) doubtless accounts for his minute descriptions of donations of land to Brāhmaṇas (*agrahāras*) and similar endowments. Of the third source he quotes or refers to two specific instances (I 344 and V 352). The fourth source is represented by his quotations from miscellaneous works bearing upon the history of Kashmir. Thus he quotes in one place (IV 635-37) the satirical verses of aggrieved Brāhmaṇas against the tyrant Jayāpīḍa in their *kāvyas* and works of grammar. Reference is made elsewhere (IV 705) to a historical poem called the *Bhuvanābhyudaya* composed by the poet Saṅkuka. Besides the above sources explicitly mentioned by Kalhaṇa, internal evidence proves him to have utilised the valuable information from coins and even from the living traditions and folklore. In his narrative of contemporary history he utilized the evidence of eye-witnesses like that of his father for the reign of King Harsha. In the above brief survey, it will be noticed, the author includes both original sources in the shape of chronicles, inscriptions, coins, monuments and the evidence of eye-witnesses, as well as secondary

authorities like popular satires and the living historical traditions. This is as comprehensive a list as could reasonably be expected of a writer in Kalhaṇa's position, who had of course no access to the official documents and the foreign notices of his country's history.

CHRONOLOGICAL DIVISIONS IN KALHAṆA'S WORK

I. 'Ancient period'

Though Kalhaṇa himself is hardly aware of this difference, his treatment of Kashmirian history naturally divides itself into two well-marked periods. These are, firstly, 'the ancient' or the semi-legendary times (from the beginning to the end of the so-called Gonandiya dynasty), and secondly, 'the modern' or the historical period (from the beginning of the Kārkoṭa dynasty to Kalhaṇa's own times).

From the introductory verses of Kalhaṇa's work (49-56) we may safely conclude that he took over from his predecessors the traditional synchronism of the first Kashmir rulers with the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas as the starting-point of his chronology. But instead of dating back the Bhārata War, as was done by some of his predecessors, to the end of Dvāpara and the beginning of the Kali age, he placed Yudhisṭhira's coronation on the authority of Varāhamihira's *Brhatsaṃhitā* in 2526 *ante Śaka* era or 653 Kali era. This led him to vindicate against the older authors just quoted the aggregate of 2268 years for the reigns of the early kings from the beginning to the end of the Gonandiya dynasty (Book I). What great pains Kalhaṇa took to justify this traditional figure is proved by his elaborate calculations. The sum of 2268 years, he says (I 50 ff.), added to the 653 years commencing from the beginning of the Kali era to Gonanda's accession and the 1328 years for the duration of all reigns described in the subsequent books (Books II-VIII), gives 4249 of the *Laukika* era or 1070 year of the *Śaka* era, which, as the chronicler tells us, is the exact date of commencement of his work. Two other chronological aggregates mentioned by Kalhaṇa (I 53-54) are 2330 years counted from the accession of Gonanda III to his own time and 1266 years for the reigns of the 52 lost kings. Against Kalhaṇa's date of the first king Gonanda I Stein has argued that it was "obtained by connecting a semi-mythical king of the *Purāṇa* tradition with a purely legendary event of the Great Indian Epic and its imaginary chronology." The aggregate of 2268 years has been objected to by the same scholar as it relates to a single dynasty of which 5 kings had already been 'lost' to early tradition and that of 2330 years has been held to be avowedly based on the rough calculation of the reign-periods from Gonanda III to Kalhaṇa's own date. These arguments by themselves do not appear to us to be quite convincing. To take an analogous case, the date 753 B.C., with which Roman history begins, is connected with an almost similar legendary event in the lifetime of an equally semi-mythical king. As for the second argument,

there is nothing inherently improbable in the number and total duration of the most ancient reigns being handed down by genuine tradition, while the names of the individual kings were forgotten. The third argument is disproved by the fact that Kalhaṇa's rough total of reigns described in Books II-VIII (viz. 1328 years) corresponds closely enough, according to Stein's own showing, to the actual figure (1329 years, 3 months and 28 days) obtained by adding up the recorded individual reign-periods. In other respects Stein's criticism of Kalhaṇa's early chronology appears to us to be just and proper. Kalhaṇa's figures for individual reigns give an average of more than forty-eight years for the first three dynasties and those of forty-eight years for the first, thirty-two for the second and fifty-nine for the third dynasty. The patent absurdity of such high figures is proved by contrast with the average of less than eleven years for the kings of the historical period (Books IV-VIII). The absurdity of Kalhaṇa's early chronology reaches its height in the case of King Raṇāditya (Book II) immediately preceding his first historical dynasty, who is credited with a reign of not less than three hundred years. In the case of six early kings of the ancient period, whose chronology is ascertainable from the independent evidence of inscriptions and coins, Stein's careful examination has proved the discrepancy between the actual dates and Kalhaṇa's assumed dates to range from four or five to twelve centuries. The kings are Aśoka (3rd c. B.C.), Kanishka (1st c. A.D.) Mihirakūla (first half of 6th c. A.D.), Toramāṇa (5th c. A.D.), Pravarasena II (6th c. A.D.) and two White Hun rulers Kīṅgila and Laḥkhaṇa (5th or 6th c. A.D.) for whom Kalhaṇa's dates would work up respectively to considerably *ante* 1182 B.C., shortly *ante* 1182 B.C., 704-634 B.C., end of 1st c. A.D., 250-214 B.C. and 209-222 A.D.⁶

Coming to Kalhaṇa's narrative of 'the ancient period', we find it hardly more satisfactory than his early chronology. Thus of fifty-two 'lost' but partially recovered kings the first four are admittedly borrowed by him from the *Nilamata*, an authority on the ancient hieratic lore of the land, but of no historical worth. The legend of the *Nilamata* is narrated in the form of the answer of the sage Vaiśampāyana to his interlocutor King Janamejaya as to why no Kashmirian king took part in the Great War, although the land of Kashmir is "the chief of those situated on this earth". The author's object is evidently to glorify the land of Kashmir and to connect its early history with the legends of the *Mahābhārata*. The blank of thirty-five 'lost' kings which Kalhaṇa leaves immediately after the four rulers of the Gonanda group is only important as showing how imaginative Muslim chroniclers of later times sought to fill it up with a curious jumble of Hindu and Muhammadan royal names. As regards the following eight royal names borrowed by Kalhaṇa from Helārāja the kings are remembered, apart from conventional descriptions, in connection with their supposed foundations of towns, temples, monasteries and

⁶ For the criticism of Kalhaṇa's chronology vide Stein, *op. cit.* Vol. I,

Introd., pp. 61-66.

the like and in one case with construction of a canal. From the identity of initial consonants of the royal names and the buildings, it has been suspected that the connection of the kings with their foundations is based merely on popular tradition. The names themselves, for aught that we know, might be the creations of popular etymology. Of the next five kings of the 'lost' group taken over by Kalhaṇa from Chhavillākara through Padmamihira three at least, Aśoka, Kanishka and Hushka (Huvishka), are known from other sources as historical personages. Aśoka is, rightly enough, described as a pious Buddhist, and some of his foundations of *stūpas* and *vihāras* are mentioned, we do not know on what authority, by the chronicler. As regards Kalhaṇa's story of Aśoka's benefactions to the Śaiva shrine of Vijayeśvara and his building of Śivite temples, Stein argues that it is fully in keeping with Aśoka's known attitude towards other great religious systems. We, however, think that the chronicler's account of Aśoka's propitiation of Śiva Bhuteśa for obtaining a son for exterminating the *mlechchhas* is inconsistent with the spirit of the *dharma* inculcated in his edicts, while his alleged Śaiva foundations altogether lack confirmation and are indeed improbable for such an early date. Kalhaṇa's genealogy of Aśoka, as Stein has shown, is quite fanciful, for he makes the king the son of Śachinara and the great-grandson of Śakuni. Evidently the Kashmirian tradition of the great Maurya had clouded his genuine history with a mass of fiction. Kalhaṇa's mention of the buildings of towns, *vihāras* and *chaityas* by the "Turushka" (really Kushan) kings and of the possession of the greater part of the land by the Buddhists in their time appears to be quite authentic. The date of these kings given in the year 150 of the *Nirvāṇa* era and the mention of Nāgārjuna as their Kashmirian contemporary have been held by Stein to have been borrowed directly from Buddhist traditions. Of the other kings of Chhavillākara's list, such marvellous stories are told as clearly belong to the domain of legend and folklore. Among these is Jalauka, son of Aśoka, described as a great conqueror who cleared the land of *mlechchhas* and establishing settlers from the conquered countries, gave the kingdom its first complete system of administration. To this group also belongs Abhimanyu I, in whose reign a pious Brāhmaṇ is said through favour of Nilarāja to have brought about the deliverance of the land from 'the intolerable plague of Baudddhas'—a legend borrowed entirely, as Stein has shown, from the story in the *Nilamata* describing the deliverance of the kingdom from the plague of *Piśāchas*.

When we turn to Kalhaṇa's first connected account (Book I, 185ff.) of a royal dynasty (that of Gonanda III), we find only two of the kings sufficiently attested by independent evidence. These are the Ephthalite or White Hun rulers Mihirakula (known from his inscriptions and coins as well as from notices of the Chinese pilgrims) and Kṣiṅkhila-Narendrāditya (identified with the *Deva Śāhi Kṣiṅgila* of a unique silver coin). Kalhaṇa's picturesque stories of the cruelties of Mihirakula, who is described as a second God of Death, as a royal *Vetāla* and as a slayer of three

crores of human beings, are in full accord with the version of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tshang. The story of Mihirakula's expedition to Ceylon, according to Stein, is probably a reminiscence of the king's distant wars. A "tenacious popular tradition" quoted by the chronicler attributes to Mihirakula after all his cruelties in *Āryadeśa* the restoration in Kashmir of pious observances which had greatly suffered through barbarian irruptions. The same tradition credits him with grant of lands to Gandhāra Brahmans as his atonement at the time of his voluntary self-immolation. Stein thinks the last tradition to have a truly historical basis in view of Mihirakula's known close connection with Gandhāra. The story of the king's foundation of Śivite shrines is in full accord with the Śaiva emblems and legends of his coins.⁷

In Kalhaṇa's narrative of the dynasties of his Books II and III the marvellous element still preponderates, although we have undoubted fragments of genuine historical tradition mixed up with the same. We read of Saṁdhimitra-Āryadeva, a king's minister, who was first put to death by his wicked master, but was miraculously restored to life, and who afterwards reigned as an ascetic on the throne till his voluntary abdication. Of another king, Meghavāhana, such marvellous stories are told that the chronicler confesses (III 94) his embarrassment in recording "acts which cannot be believed by the common people." These include a career of universal conquest (*digvijaya*) in course of which the king is said to have received the submission of Vibhishana, the demon-king of Ceylon! "While he ruled", we are told (III 81) with characteristic poetical hyperbole, "animals were not killed by wicked creatures, neither in the waters by otters and other (aquatic animals), nor in the thickets by lions and other (wild beasts), nor in the air by eagles and other (birds of prey)". We are next introduced to a Prince Toramāṇa described as an unlucky pretender who spent his whole life in prison for his presumption in issuing coins during the lifetime of his brother king Hiranya. But this Toramāṇa, to judge from his abundant issue of copper coins bearing for the first time the distinctive type of Hindu Kashmirian coinage, was undoubtedly a powerful conqueror. In fact he was evidently identical with the famous Ephthalite ruler of that name who is known to have ruled North-Western India at the end of the fifth century. We are next told of a poet Mātṛigupta, who through romantic devotion won the favour of the celebrated Harsha Vikramāditya, ruler of Ujjayinī and conqueror of the Śakas, and who was afterwards sent by his master to rule Kashmir. Quotations from a poet Mātṛigupta occur in the works of Kashmirian authors

⁷ The list of 52 'lost kings' in Kalhaṇa's work is made up as follows:—4 (borrowed from *Nilamata*+35 (left blank)+8 (borrowed from Helārāja)+5 (borrowed from Chhavillākara). On the legendary discourse between Vaiśampāyana and Janamejaya vide *Nilamata* (K. de Vrees's ed., pp. 1-3). A critical account of the kings of Book I in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* is given by

Stein, *op. cit.* Vol. I, *Introd.* pp. 72-80. If we accept Mihirakula's identity with the Hūṇa king of Gandhāra described by the Chinese ambassador Sung-Yun, c. 520 A.D. and with Gollas, king of the White Huns mentioned by Cosmas Indicopleustes, c. 535 A.D., we shall find a partial corroboration of Kalhaṇa's account in two contemporary sources.

like the *Auchityavichāracharchā* of Kshemendra and the *Subhāshitāvali* of Vallabhadeva, but no independent evidence exists of his rule in Kashmir. Pravarasena I, alleged to be the son of Toramāṇa, is credited by Kalhaṇa with a successful expedition as far as the Eastern Ocean on the one side, of Surāshṭra on the Western Ocean on the other. On the other hand, Stein has thought Kalhaṇa's pointed reference to Kashmir being 'subject to Harsha and other foreign kings' at the beginning of this period to be a clear indication of foreign conquest. Again, the several traditions relating to the pious foundations of several kings and queens of this period appear to have had a historical character. As Stein points out, one of these foundations, the *Amṛitabhavana vihāra*, said to have been built for foreign Bhikshus by Amṛitaprabha, queen of the semi-mythical Meghavāhana, is mentioned by the Chinese pilgrim, Ou-k'ong. Equally genuine seems to be the tradition of Māṭrigupta's patronage of the poet Menṭha, author of the lost poem from *Hayagrivabadha*. Two other kings of Kalhaṇa's list are known from the independent evidence of coins. The rare gold and silver coins of Pravarasena II show a close connection on the one hand with the Kashmirian Toramāṇa coins, and on the other hand with the coinage of the Kidāra Kushans, the successors of the Great Kushans in Gandhāra after the fifth century. The other king Laḥkhaṇa-Narendrāditya is probably identical with *Rājā Laḥkhaṇa Udayāditya* of a unique silver coin. Lastly, we have to note with Stein that Kalhaṇa's account of the building of Pravarapura by Pravarasena II as his new capital is attested not only by the surviving tradition, but also by the evidence of the Chinese annals and the pilgrim Hiuen Tsang.⁸

II. 'The Modern Period'

In the narrative of Kalhaṇa, 'the modern' or the historical period dawns with the rise of the Kārkoṭa dynasty in the early part of the seventh century A.D. (Book IV), and comes into full bloom with the advent of the Utpala dynasty in 855-56 A.D. (Book V). Of the Kārkoṭa kings, Durlabhavardhana, Pratāpāditya II, Lalitāditya and Jayāpīḍa (Vinayāditya) are known from their coins. Kings Chandrāpīḍa, Lalitāditya (Muktāpīḍa) and probably also Durlabhavardhana, are likewise mentioned in the valuable Chinese annals. King Chippaṭajayāpīḍa (otherwise called Brihaspati) is mentioned as his patron by the poet Rājānaka Ratnākara in his *Haravijaya* poem. By checking Kalhaṇa's dates for Chandrāpīḍa and Muktāpīḍa with those from the Chinese annals and by considering Kalhaṇa's account of the synchronism of the poet Ratnākara with King Avantivarman of the Utpala dynasty, Stein has found it necessary to rectify Kalhaṇa's chronology with the addition

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It will be seen from the above that not to speak of the ancient times, *cit.* p. 90) complains of the absence of all historical details in Kalhaṇa's account, he ignores the chronicler's inclusion among Lalitāditya's adventures of a Karnaṭa princess Raṭṭā who is said to have ruled 'like Durgā' over Dakṣhiṇāpatha and is specially praised for making the roads over the Vindhya (evidently on her northern frontier) "adequate and free from obstacles". It is difficult to understand why Stein (Book IV 153*n*) following Wilson suggested the identification of the

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the historical period alone in Kalhaṇa's chronicle extends over five centuries. To the above we may add that Kalhaṇa justifies the claim that he makes in one of his introductory verses (I. 21) of writing a well-arranged work. "The River of Kings" (*Rājatarāṅgiṇī*), in fact, is divided into eight "waves", (*tarāṅgas*), of very unequal size it is true, each dealing with a single dynasty or a pair of them. Thus Book I consisting of 373 verses deals with the reigns of the "lost" fifty-two kings and their immediate successors of the Gonandīya dynasty. Book II (171 verses) is concerned with some isolated reigns. In Book III (530 verses) we have an account of the restored Gonandīya dynasty. Book IV (720 verses) is occupied with the Kārkoṭa dynasty and Book V (483 verses) with the Utpala dynasty. Book VI (368 verses) has for its theme the dynasties of Yaśaskara and Parvagupta. Book VII (1732 verses) is concerned with the first Lohara dynasty and Book VIII (3449 verses), the last and the longest of all, deals with the second Lohara dynasty down to the chronicler's own time.¹¹

Topical analysis of Kalhaṇa's chronicle :—

(a) *Political history, court scandals etc.*

As a historical composition, the "River of Kings" is not confined in its scope to what is called political history, but is a work of varied contents. Especially in the last two Books which deal with recent and contemporary history the author gives us, as is natural in the circumstances, vivid accounts of the royal court including details of the royal family, the successive appointments to the principal administrative offices as well as court intrigues and scandals. As regards the last point, we may mention that revolting stories of debauchery are recorded of a number of evil Kings such as Chakravarman (V 392ff.), Kshemagupta (VI 158ff.), and Kalaśa (VII 292ff.). What is quite extraordinary is that lapses from the Brahmanical moral or social code are industriously reported even of admittedly able rulers like Queen Diddā (VI 189, *ibid* 321-22) and king Yaśaskara (VI 69ff.) as well as of other characters who did not play any important part on the historical stage. These facts would seem to illustrate the completeness—unapproached by the chronicle of any other part of India—with which the pictures of court life have been handed down by the Kashmir chronicler. We may further take them to illustrate the freedom which the authors of historical *kāvyas*, could, if they chose, enjoy in recording the uglier aspects of their heroes' characters.

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The *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, however, is far from being a mere political history or Court-Gazetteer. With his father occupying a high office (that of

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¹¹ The chronological and genealogical tables of the Kashmirian dynasties are

given by Stein, *op. cit.* Vol. I, *Introd.*, pp. 134-45.

'Lord of the Gate') under King Harsha, Kalhaṇa could not but feel interested in the past and present administration of his native land. In his First Book (I 118-120) we find him making a notable attempt to trace the development of administrative institutions in his home-land in the dim past. Even before Jalauka (one of the 52 'lost' kings) when the kingdom according to the chronicler, had not attained its proper development in wealth, judicial administration (*vyavahāra*) and the like, it was reputed to have possessed a staff of seven officials. These were the *Dharmādhyaksha* (Judge), the *Dhanādhyaksha* ('Revenue Superintendent'), the *Koshādhyaksha* ('Treasurer'), the *Chamūpati* ('Army Commander'), the *Dūta* (Envoy), the *Purohita* (Chaplain) and the *Daivajña* ('Astrologer'). Jalauka, who is credited with clearing the land of *Mlechchhas* and settling people of the four castes from Kānyakubja and other conquered countries, is said to have created eighteen offices 'in accordance with traditional usage'. Coming to historical times, Kalhaṇa ascribes (IV 141-43) a further expansion of the official organisation to Lalitāditya, who is said to have created by the side of the eighteen older offices the five new offices (or rather titles) beginning with the word Chief (*mahān*). These were the posts called *mahāpratīhāra*, *mahāsandhivigraha*, *mahāśvaśāla*, *mahābhāṇḍāgāra* and *mahāsāadhanabhāga*. Further evidence of the complex bureaucratic organisation is found in connexion with the author's incidental references to a number of administrative posts in later times. Some of these offices like those of the *Nagarādhikṛita* or *Nagarādhipa* ('City Prefect'), the *Pratīhāra* ('Chamberlain'), the *Daṇḍanāyaka* ('Prefect of Police'?) and the *Rājasthāniya* ('Chief Justice'?) had their counterparts in other parts of India. Common to both also was the office of *Akshapaṭala* (Accounts Office), though the *Ekāṅgas* of the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, forming a kind of military police attached to the same, are not traceable elsewhere. Other offices like those of the *Pādāgra* (apparently concerned with the collection of the revenue), the *Dvārapati* ('Lord of the Gate', i.e. commander of the frontier passes), the *Maṇḍaleśa* ('Governor'), the *Kampaneśa* ('Commander-in-chief') and the *Sarvādhikārin* ('Prime Minister') seem more or less to be peculiar to Kashmir.

In the branch of judicial administration, we find a number of rulers in Kalhaṇa's long record of kings and dynasties being credited with a high sense of justice and exceptional sagacity in the decision of difficult law-suits. Kalhaṇa delights in telling anecdotes of these rulers, which no doubt were sufficiently impressive to be handed down to his own times by authentic tradition. To confine ourselves to the historical period, we may begin with the anecdote (IV 55ff.) of king Chandrāpīḍa and the tanner, which illustrates the former's anxiety to do justice to the meanest of his subjects. In the course of this story the king is made to utter the following noble words illustrative of his high sense of duty. "If we, who are to look after right and wrong, do unlawful acts, who should proceed by the right path?" The same king's desire to do justice even at the risk of his life is illustrated by the following anecdote (IV 82ff.) of a Brāhmaṇa's

wife bereft of her husband by the witchcraft of an envious Brāhmaṇa and seeking redress from the ruler. Of the Brāhmaṇa king Yaśaskara (939-948 A.D.) two stories are told (VI 14ff.) illustrative of his Solomon-like wisdom in the decision of difficult law-suits. Even of so recent a king as Uchchala (1101-1111 A.D.). Kalhaṇa records (VIII 123 ff.) a similar judgment in a difficult suit between a depositor and a fraudulent merchant. On the other hand Kalhaṇa had only too many occasions, as we shall see presently, to refer to the violations of justice by evil rulers.

In the course of his long and detailed narrative of the history of his native land Kalhaṇa from time to time throws light upon the administration of the finances. Of the seven offices which, according to Kalhaṇa's authorities, existed even before king Jalauka, two were certainly concerned with revenue administration. These were the offices of the *Dhanādhyakṣa* and the *Kośādhyakṣa* above mentioned. Of the four new offices said to have been created by Lalitāditya, one, viz. the *Mahābhāṇḍāgāra* (Superintendent of the royal store-house) was evidently charged with collection of the royal revenue. Probably the first authentic fact in the revenue history of Kashmir is the reference (IV 620ff.) to the cruel exactions (including the appropriation of the whole harvest for three years and confiscation of the endowed lands or *Agrahāras* of Brāhmaṇas) perpetrated by Jayāpīḍya, who was, according to Kalhaṇa, the first Kashmirian king to be ruled by the *kāyasthas* (officials). We find also in the same reign the earliest reference (IV 589) to the creation of special funds (*Gaṇjas*) for which separate revenues were assigned, and which were worked by separate officers. A later king, Śaṅkaravarman (883-902 A.D.), according to Kalhaṇa (V 167), established two revenue offices namely the *Aṭṭapati-bhāga* ('the share of the lord of the market') and the *Grihakṛitya* ('domestic affairs'). The former evidently was entrusted with the collection of the royal market dues, which can be traced back to the *Arthaśāstra*. The latter, which was in charge of one treasurer and five secretaries (V 177), was entrusted with raising the revenue, as later references (V 176, VII 1428 etc.) indicate, from manipulation of weights and measures, from fines on villagers, from fees levied on domestic occasions and so forth. Śaṅkaravarman's exactions extended (V 167-176) to spoliations of temple-properties and temple-corporations (*parshad*) as well as systematic levy of forced labour and other imposts from the villagers. As the author ruefully complains (V 179-181), the result of the king's measures was that the *kāyasthas*, 'those sons of slaves', alone rose in power, while the learned lost all respect and the kings their royal dignity. Thus, as the author writes severely in his concluding judgment (V 178), "This foolish (ruler) accepted (residence in) hell for himself, in order to benefit by his sinful acts future kings or the functionaries." Coming to later reigns, Kalhaṇa refers (VI 136) to financial exactions under king Parvagupta (949-950 A.D.). During the regency of Queen Diddā a low-born upstart holding the office of head of the treasury created a new revenue office and certain new imposts (VI 266). A later king, Saṃgrāmarāja (1003-

1028 A.D.) is spoken of (VII 110) as fleeing his subjects. King Ananta (1028-1063 A.D.) is mentioned (VII 144, 147, 189-94) not only as wasting his revenue on his favourites, but also as planning the sacrilegious destruction of divine images. In the same reign 'a wicked minister' is said (VII 203) to have introduced an impost of 1/12, while his good successor is said (VII 211-212) to have abolished the royal privilege of marking the gold according to quality and price, in order to remove the chance of oppression by later kings. King Kalaśa (1063-1089 A.D.), Ananta's son and successor, is mentioned (VII 367) as raising a loan from rich persons, when marching against his father. Among Kalaśa's wicked acts immediately before his death are mentioned (VII 696-97) his sacrilegious destruction of some divine images and confiscation of properties of those who died without issue. These exactions were out-done by Kalaśa's son Harsha (1089-1101 A.D.), who carried out a wholesale spoliation of temple-properties as well as defilement and destruction of divine images, and thus earned for himself the opprobrious epithet of 'the Turushka' (VII 1095). In connection with these exactions the tyrant is said (VII 1091; 1103-04) to have created a number of new offices like those of the *Devotpātanāyaka* ('prefect for the overthrow of divine images') and the *Arthanāyaka* ('prefect of property'). In the reign of Kalhaṇa's contemporary king Jayasīṃha an unruly *Dāmarā* is said (VIII 2010) after imprisoning the king's officers to have, 'collected the customs at the watch-station and had his own name stamped in red lead on the wares as if he were the king'. This illustrates a method of receiving payment of tolls which has its antecedent in Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*. Reference is made (VIII, 1428) in the same reign to exactions of taxes on various auspicious occasions.

An interesting sidelight is thrown by Kalhaṇa on municipal administration in his own time. To the credit of a bravo who had earned the office of City Prefect by a political murder at the king's bidding, Kalhaṇa records (VIII 3334 ff) that this officer first remedied the long-standing abuses such as the disuse of cash in commercial transactions and the imposition of fines on householders for moral lapses of married women. But afterwards the same official punished many persons on the plea that they had received dancing girls in their households as married wives.

A unique interest belongs to the enlightened reign of Avantivarman (855/6-883 A.D.) because of the extensive drainage and irrigation works constructed under the king's orders by an officer of untutored genius called Suyya. The land of Kashmir, says the chronicler in introducing his account (V 84-121), was always liable to devastating floods of the Mahāpadma (Volur) lake and the many streams. Volunteering his services for preventing this calamity, Suyya by a very simple but ingenious contrivance deepened the bed of the Vitastā (Jhelam) at its two ends (the village Nandaka in Maḍavarāja and the gorge Yakshadara or 'the demon's cleft' in Kramarāja), cleaned the river-bed at its bottom after constructing a temporary stone dam, constructed new beds for the

river at all threatened points and built protective stone embankments for seven *yojanas* (nearly 42 miles) along the river bank (apparently up its course above the Volur lake). With his usual topographic accuracy Kalhaṇa tells us how Suyya in the course of these operations shifted the junction of the Vitastā and the Sindhu from its old to its existing position. On the land raised from the water by Suyya's efforts he founded many villages protected by circular dykes. These measures were followed up by the construction of extensive irrigation-works according to strictly technical processes described by the chronicler. Well might the enthusiastic author, steeped in Brahmanical lore, appraise Suyya's achievement in a single birth as equalling that of God Viṣṇu in his four incarnations of Varāha, Paraśurāma, Rāmachandra and Kṛṣṇa. With his usual appreciation of concrete facts the author concludes by quoting the resulting fall in the price of rice, the staple produce of the valley. Formerly the average price of one *khārī* of rice was 200 *dīnnāras* in good years and as high as 1050 *dīnnāras* in times of famine. But it was reduced to 36 *dīnnāras* after Suyya's construction.¹²

(c) *Pious foundations, buildings of cities and charitable endowments*

With characteristic antiquarian zeal Kalhaṇa records from the earliest times (those of the lost 52 kings) down to his own time innumerable foundations of temples and the like by pious kings, queens, ministers and other officials, and their wives. While the oldest references probably rest on popular tradition alone, those from the Kārkoṭa dynasty onwards have undoubtedly a historical basis. In one interesting passage (VIII 2414) Kalhaṇa singles out Diddā among queens and Sussalā (wife of Jayasimha's minister Rilhaṇa) among ministers' wives as occupying the foremost rank for their numerous religious foundations. Foremost among the builders of towns and their shrines are the kings Pravarasena II (2nd half of the sixth century), Lalitāditya (1st half of the eighth century) and Avantivarman (855/6—883 A.D.). The first is credited with the construction of Pravarapura (on the site of modern Śrinagar with its shrines of Viṣṇu Jayasvāmin and Śiva Pravareśvara. The second built the magnificent Mārtaṇḍa temple and the great city of Parihāsapura with its splendid temples of Viṣṇu Muktākeśava, Parihāśakeśava and Govardhanadhara as well as the equally famous Buddhist Rājavihāra and a colossal Buddha image. The third built the city of Avantipura with its temples of Viṣṇu Avantisvāmin and Śiva Avantīśvara.

Connected with the above are Kalhaṇa's references to the creation of charitable endowments of various sorts by a number of royal and

¹² For refs. to administrative posts vide Stein, *op. cit.* Vol. II, Index, s. v. *dharmādhyakṣa*, *ghanādhyakṣa*, *koshādhyakṣa* etc. A historical account of the revenue system in Ancient

Kashmir based upon Kalhaṇa is given in H.R.S. pp. 249-52. On Suyya's engineering operations, vide Stein, *op. cit.* Notes on V 85, 87, 103.

other donors. From the time of the lost 52 kings onwards Kalhaṇa records numerous instances of the grant of land-endowments (*agarhāras*) and hospices (*maṭhas*) by the kings, queens, high officials and their wives and so forth. As regards other endowments of a similar nature, king Narendrāditya I (Khinikhila) is said (I 347) to have founded a permanent endowment (*akshayinī*) for the feeding of Brāhmaṇas. Of the saintly queen of Tuñjina I, we are told (II 58) that she established a hospice (*sattra*) 'where multitudes of indigent people coming from all parts receive food even at the present day.' A later king, Raṇāditya I, is said (III 461) to have established a hospital (*ārogyasālā*) for the healing of sick people. Coming to historical times, a minister of king Jayāpīḍa is mentioned (IV 494) as the author of a charity foundation (*bhaktasālā*), while the 'foremost *Kāyastha*' of king Ananta's time is said (VII 149) to have built a *maṭha* for the blind (*andhamaṭha*). King Yaśaskara is credited (VI 87) with the foundation of a *maṭha* "for students from Āryadeśa who were devoting themselves to the acquisition of knowledge." Among the greedy and oppressive officials of king Sussala's reign Kalhaṇa singles out (VIII 570-71) a *Kāyastha* who created a permanent endowment for the distribution of food (*avichchhinnaśattra*) for giving relief to famine-stricken people from various foreign lands. Of the minister Rihhaṇa's wife Sussalā mentioned above we are told (VIII 2416) that she constructed all kinds of pious works such as water-wheels, wells and halls for students.

It speaks much for Kalhaṇa's honesty as a historian that he faithfully records the pious foundations of admittedly bad rulers and ministers. To take one conspicuous instance, he mentions, though as an example of the inscrutability of the human mind, the foundation of a Śaiva shrine by Mihirakula, a monster of cruelty. From the latter's tainted hands we are told (I 305-7) *agrahāras* were received by Brāhmaṇas from Gandhāra "resembling himself in their habits and verily themselves the lowest of the twice-born." As the instance just quoted shows, Kalhaṇa has no praise for pious acts proceeding from such tainted sources. Especially bitter is his denunciation of those evil rulers of the 'modern' period who despoiled foundations of previous kings for benefiting their own. Thus in denouncing the tyrant Śaṅkaravarman for building his town out of the spoils of Lalitāditya's capital of Parihāsapura, he speaks (V 160) with bitter satire of the 'poets and kings of these modern times' who 'augment their own work by plundering the poems or the property of others.' Describing the erection of a Śaiva temple by Kshemagupta out of the spoils of a famous Buddhist *vihāra* and other decayed temples, Kalhaṇa comments severely (VI 174) upon the folly of those who feel elated in robbing the property of others, but are ignorant of the same fate overtaking their own constructions. When speaking of the pious foundation of a prince of his own time, Kalhaṇa says with bitter irony (VIII 3351), "This pure-minded man, though he was one of our time, did not proceed to plunder other foundations and to make grants of the property of poor people." On the other hand Kalhaṇa

expresses (VII 122) his appreciation of the good sense of Saṃgrāmarāja who did not establish even a drinking-place on the ground that 'the wealth he owned was unlawfully acquired.'¹³

(d) References to scholars and poets

As a scholar and poet, it was quite natural for Kalhaṇa to be interested in the growth of learning in his land and the lives and fortunes of his fellow-poets. According to a tradition recorded by him (I 176) Chandragomin and other scholars acting under the orders of king Abhimanyu I (one of the lost kings) revived the study of the *Mahābhāṣya* which had fallen into disuse through the absence of teachers and texts. A similar claim is made (IV 488) evidently on more authentic grounds on behalf of king Jayāpīḍa. Turning to another point, we find Kalhaṇa mentioning (II 16) a great poet Chandaka, the author of a remarkable but unnamed play, as being the contemporary of king Tuñjina I. Coming to the historical period, king Jayāpīḍa is said (IV 489 ff.) to have achieved enduring fame for his scholarship, while he is said to have bestowed his patronage upon the grammarian Kshīra (probably identical with the well-known *Amarakośa* commentator), the Bhaṭṭa Udbhata (author of a famous work on rhetoric called *Alaṃkārasāra-saṃgraha*) and the poet Dāmodaragupta (author of the *Kuṭṭanīmata*). King Avantivarman is praised (V 33 ff.) for his patronage of the poets Ānandavardhana (author of the well-known work called the *Dhvanyāloka*) and Ratnākara (known to be the author of the *Haravijaya* poem). The brilliant and accomplished Harsha in the early and glorious part of his reign is said (VII 934-37) to have been such a lavish patron of scholars that Bilhaṇa, the Kashmirian poet, enjoying high favour of the contemporary Chālukya king Vikramāditya VI, thought even his great splendour a deception. On the other hand Kalhaṇa does not fail to mention a number of wicked kings who earned infamy by ignoring men of letters. Under the tyrant Śaṅkara-varman, we are told, (V 204-206) poets like Bhallaṭa had to lead the meanest existence while a load-carrier drew a pay of 2000 *dinnāras*. As the chronicler exclaims in indignant language, this boorish king 'who did not speak the language of the gods but used vulgar speech fit for drunkards' proved by his act his descent from a family of spirit distillers.¹⁴

(e) Military affairs

Nothing in the *Rājatarangīnī* is more surprising than Kalhaṇa's

¹³ On Kalhaṇa's refs. to building of temples etc., vide Stein, *op. cit.* Vol. I, *Introd.* pp. 84-85, 92, 97; Vol. II, *Index*, s. v. *agrahāra* and *maṭha*. To the above we may add the notices in *ASR*. 1914-15, 1916-17, and the work entitled *The Ancient Monuments in*

Kashmir by Ramchandra Kak, pp. 118-25, 131-35-, 146-49.

¹⁴ The ref. (I 176) to revival of study of the *Mahābhāṣya* follows the reading and tr. of Stein in preference to those of Kielhorn. (*IA* V 107).

accurate and minute descriptions of military operations forming a considerable portion of the troubled history of Kashmir during later times. Again and again the author gives us details of the routes of armies (including the distances and the seasons) which Stein's industrious research has proved to fit in exactly with facts. What, however, constitutes his unique merit among the authors of historical *Kavyas* is that he gives technical details of the marches, battles and sieges, befitting a truly military historian. To take a few instances, Kalhana strongly criticises (VII 48 ff.) through the mouth of 'the illustrious Śāhi Trilochanapāla' (of the Hindu Śāhīya dynasty) the rashness and incompetence of his Kashmirian ally Tuṅga (the minister of king Saṁgrāmarāja) in the fight against 'Hammīra', 'the leader of the Turushka army' (i.e. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna). Noticing that Tuṅga 'gave no thought to night-watches, the posting of scouts, to military exercises and other (preparations) proper for an attack', the Śāhi urged him, but in vain, to take up his position on the scarp of a hill till he had become familiar with 'the Turushka warfare'. The rejection of this wise advice led to the utter rout of the confederate host, with the result that it 'brought about the descent of the Turushkas on the whole surface of the earth.' Again, when speaking (VII 968 ff.) of an expedition against the hill-state of Rājapurī in Harsha's reign, Kalhana carefully notes how the royal army delayed on the route 'fearing the heat of the Āshāḍha month', and he mentions how at last success followed from the royal commander's ingenious contrivance of throwing burning arrows smeared with vegetable oil which made the enemy credit him with the possession of 'the weapon of fire'. In connection with the siege of Śrinagar by the rebellious Ḍāmaras in Sussala's reign, Kalhana's minute description (VIII 729 ff.) enables us to understand how the city was invested by different bodies of rebels from the south (on the bank of the Kshiptikā stream), the north (by way of Amareśvara) and the east (on the Mahāsarit stream). The roads were kept in uproar with the troops marching out with music, with the return of the wounded, with the flight of routed soldiers and so forth. The king, whose courageous defence for the treatment of the wounded and encouraged his troops with the gift of 'marching allowances, gratuities and medicines'. The rebels attacking from the east, being no match for the king's strong cavalry, marched by a narrow path along the embankment across the marshes lining the north of the (Ḍāl) lake. "As they were strong in archers, they came off best in the fight in the narrow embankment across the lake". The king, disheartened by the treachery and mutiny of his troops and disaffection of his subjects, left the capital for the family stronghold of Lohara by a circuitous route which Stein very aptly explains by a reference to the advanced season. The date of the king's flight is given as 'the 6th day of the dark half of Mārgaśīras in the year of the Laukika era 4196' (i.e. November 13th, 1120 A.D.). Equally

admirable is Kalhaṇa's detailed account (VIII 1076 ff.) of the fresh siege of Śrinagar by the rebels in 1122 A.D., the year following Sussala's restoration. Even more impressive is Kalhaṇa's account (VIII 2505 ff.) of the siege and capture of the rebel stronghold of Śiraḥśilā situated in a most inhospitable territory on the north-west frontier by king Jayasimha's forces in 1140 A.D. Not only is the site of the castle (cf. VIII 2492 where it is said to be situated between the Sindhu river and the streams of the Madhumatī and the Muktāśrī) as well as the peculiar shape of its hill (cf. VIII 2528 where it is said to be 'narrow below where it projects into the stream and with a long stretched ridge') described with the author's usual accuracy, but also the physical and climatic conditions of the country around are clearly indicated (cf. VIII 2510-11 where reference is made to its 'trees of darkness' and its 'terrible' winter owing to the heavy snowfall). These data have enabled Stein to identify the site with the Gaṇeś Ghāṭī ridge situated on the Kishangaṅgā about 2½ miles below the ancient shrine of Śāradā now called Śārdi. Kalhaṇa's detailed account of the preparations for the siege made by the royal forces has been shown by Stein to be in complete agreement with the physical and climatic conditions of the site. The 'Lord of the Gate' Udaya, as we learn from the chronicler, posted himself at the *Drāṅga* or frontier watch-station, which has been identified by Stein with the little village of the same name 'situated on the direct route from the Uttar *pargaṇā* to the Śāradā Tīrtha (Śārdi) on the Kishangaṅgā'. Stein explains this by reference to the strategic importance of the village which being the meeting place of several valleys extending down from the water-shed to the Kishangaṅgā forms an excellent position for preventing the enemy's retreat into Kashmir proper. The other royal general Dhanya built rows of wooden huts for the besieging forces on the bank of the Madhumatī. This step, according to Stein, was most necessary, as the Kishangaṅgā valley has sufficient level ground only near Śārdi, above which the land is almost uninhabitable for a considerable distance, while the climate owing to the heavy rain and snowfall and the extensive forests and numerous neighbouring snowy peaks is even colder than what might be expected from its elevation of 6500 ft. above sea-level. The king, Kalhaṇa continues, sent his generals immense supplies, a measure which, Stein says, was rendered necessary by the inhospitable nature of the country around Śārdi. The means of transport was the same oppressive system of forced labour which, as Stein observes, was used for the annual transport of stores for the Gilgit garrison until the building of the Gilgit road a few years before his time. Though the royal troops bravely held their own for three or four months, they were unable to make any impression, as they neglected to cut off the enemy's food supplies. At length they were led by the direct orders of the resolute king to lay a regular siege to the castle. Leaving his camp on the Madhumatī bank, general Dhanya advanced to the main approach to the castle and built a continuous line of block-houses whence at

night he kept up fires burning so that 'even an ant could not move about without being noticed'. Dhanya further blocked the enemy's access to the water by keeping boats constantly plying about on the river. Explaining these details with reference to the local topography, Stein says that the high ridge to the south of the castle which was its main approach and must have been occupied by Dhanya would enable him to cut off the enemy's supplies from the neighbouring hamlets and prevent all exits from the fort. Again, the keeping of boats (or rather rafts) for preventing access to the river which flows both to the north and west of the castle, 'would be practicable in the low water of the winter season when the siege took place by fastening the rafts to ropes fixed on the opposite river-bank north of the castle'. In the result the rebel Dāmara leader was so much afflicted with privations of food and drink that he surrendered two of the pretenders who had taken refuge with him to the royalists. The victorious general raised the siege and returned to the capital in triumph.¹⁵

(f) Foreign relations

Kalhaṇa's full and detailed narrative of reigns and dynasties throws valuable light from time to time upon the foreign relations of the kingdom during the past centuries. Making due allowance for the author's exaggerations we may say that the Kashmirian power undoubtedly reached its height in the reign of Lalitāditya, who indeed is credited by the chronicler (IV 146 ff.) with a victorious march all over India as well as extensive conquests of fabled lands on the west and north. The independent evidence of the Annals of the T'ang dynasty shows how Lalitāditya used both arms and diplomacy to curb the menace of the Tibetan power; for the Kashmirian king claimed to have not only won repeated victories over his northern neighbours and made common cause against them with a king of Central India, but also invited the help of a considerable Chinese force against the common enemy. On the other hand the author's account of the foreign expeditions of Jayāpīda resolves itself, as Stein well observes into a mass of mere legendary anecdotes. The expedition of Saṅkaravarman, in spite of Kalhaṇa's magniloquent description (IV 136 ff.), appears from his own account to have been confined to the Southern hill-states and the adjoining Punjab plain and to have been attended with indifferent success. But it brought Kashmir at any rate into contact with the powerful Hindu Śāhiya kingdom under its first king Lalliya Śāhi. This contact was renewed in the reign of Gopālavarman (902-904 A.D.) when the powerful minister

¹⁵ On the two sieges of Śrīnagar in Sussala's reign, vide Stein's *Notes* on VIII 729 and 1076f. The siege and capture of Śiraṣīlā by Jayasimha are described after Kalhaṇa's notices by

Stein *op. cit.*, *Notes* on VIII 2507, 2509-13, 2583, and especially in Vol. II App. Note I entitled *The Castle of Śiraṣīlā*.

Prabhākaraśāhi (V 232-33) vanquished the rebellious Śāhi of Uḍabhaṇḍapura (i.e. Sāmānta, the second Śāhi ruler in Alberuni's list), and bestowed the throne upon Toramāṇa-Kamaluka (i.e. Kamalu, the third king in Alberuni's list). The traditional connection was renewed when Bhīma Śāhi, the next king of the dynasty, had his daughter's daughter Diddā married to king Kshemagupta, and she built a Viṣṇu temple in her adoptive country (VI 177-78). Again when Trilochanapāla the last independent king of the dynasty sought the help of Saṃgrāmarāja against the forces of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, the minister Tuṅga marched out (VII 47 ff.) with a large army, but shared in the disastrous defeat which, to quote Kalhaṇa's words, 'brought about the descent of the Turushkas on the whole surface of the earth' (VII 70). Ordinarily, however, the political relations, friendly or hostile, of Kashmir were confined to the petty hill-states on its frontiers. Among the more important of such states were the kingdoms of Kāshṭhāvāṭa (modern Kistwar on the upper Chinab) and Champā (modern Chamba on the upper Ravi), the hill-states of the Dārvābhisāra (the lower and middle hills between the Chinab and the Jhelum) including above all Rājapūrī (modern Rajauri) and Lohara (modern Loharan on the north-west of Rajauri), the kingdom of Uraśā (modern Hazara district between the Jhelum and the Indus), Daradadeśa or the territory of the Darads on the upper Kishangāṅgā, and the territory of the Bhautṭas (or Tibetans) comprising as early as in Chinese times the tracts of Baltistan and Ladakh. Of these states Rājapūrī, no doubt because of its situation on the most direct route to the Punjab, was often brought into close relations with Kashmir. From the tenth century onwards Rājapūrī was practically an independent State, though the Kashmir rulers (as Kalhaṇa tells us) frequently sent expeditions into the country. The adjoining hill-state of Lohara was intimately connected with Kashmir from the beginning of the eleventh century when a branch of its ruling family ascended the Kashmir throne. Subsequently this branch succeeded also to Lohara, which became the family stronghold of the Kashmirian kings and as such played a conspicuous part in the history of the kingdom.¹⁶

(g) *Famine, flood and fire, and their economic consequences*

With his characteristic passion for facts Kalhaṇa has several times recorded careful details of natural calamities that overtook his native land in the past. Already in the reign of Tuṅjīna I, one of the ancient kings, we hear (II 17-54) of a great famine which was relieved by the noble-hearted king and his saintly queen. Coming down to the historical period, Kalhaṇa mentions (V 270-78) a dreadful famine, resulting from

¹⁶ On the foreign relations of Kashmir vide Stein, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, *Introd.* pp. 87, 91, 95. The relations of the frontier hill-States with Kashmir are

described by Stein with full refs. in his *Memoir on the Ancient Geography of Kashmir* (Vol. II, Chap. IV, Section I).

a devastating flood, to have taken place in 917-18 A.D. during the misrule of the tyrant Pārtha and his wicked ministers. The chronicler vividly illustrates the resulting rise in prices by saying that 1 *khārī* of rice sold for 1000 *dinnāras*. In the reign of Abhimanyu I (958-972 A.D.) a great conflagration broke out at Śrinagar, of which the extent is carefully noted by the chronicler (cf. VI 190-191, where the fire is said to have started from near the Tuṅgeśvara market and spread as far as Bhikshukipāraka near the shrine of Viṣṇu Vardhanasvāmin and destroyed the great buildings within the limits of 'Vetāla's measuring-line'). A great famine caused, as before, by a flood swept over the country in 1099-1100 A.D. (VII 1219 ff.), when king Harsha was oppressing his subjects and a plague was raging. The cumulative effect of the people's sufferings is well described by the author in the following words: "On this land which suffered wounds, as it were, of the king's infliction there fell also another series of calamities which were like caustics thrown (on those wounds)" (VII 1216). What terrible havoc was caused by this outbreak is illustrated by Kalhaṇa with reference to the famine prices of some principal commodities. These are given as 500 *dinnāras* of 1 *khārī* of rice, 1 *dinnāra* for 2 *palas* of grape juice, and 6 *dinnāras* for 1 *pala* of wool. 'Of salt, pepper, assafoetida and other articles it was difficult even to hear the name.' In 'the terrible year of the Laukika era 4199' i.e. 1123-24 A.D., when Sussala was besieged in his capital by the rebellious Dāmaras, a great fire was started by them which reduced the whole city to ashes. With his usual care for detail Kalhaṇa records the extent of this awful calamity (cf. VIII 1169 and 1171-72, where we are told that the fire started in the Kāshṭhila quarter and then spread to Mākshikasvāmin and Indradevībhavana Vihāra). This was followed by a terrible famine of which the effects are described by the chronicler with grim vividness (VIII 1206 ff.).¹⁷

(h) Miscellaneous affairs

Kalhaṇa's interest in the past history of his native land is not confined to the affairs of finance and justice, pious constructions, peace and war. Among king Kalaśa's good acts during the latter part of his reign is mentioned (VII 606) the king's introduction of a taste for choral songs (*upāṅgagīta*) and a careful selection of female dances 'as customary in other lands'. The accomplished Harsha in the early part of his reign is said to have introduced into his court (VII 921 ff.) gorgeous fashions of dress and ornament, and adopted a new coin-type borrowed from the gold coinage of Karṇāṭa.

¹⁷ Kalhaṇa's refs. to the famine prices of commodities in 1099-1100 A.D. are studied by Stein, *op. cit.* in Vol. II, App. Note H entitled *The term Dīnnāra and the Monetary System of Kash-*

mir. Stein's calculations of these prices work up to 960 *dinnāras* for 1 *khārī* of grape juice, and 11520 *dinnāras* for 1 *khārī* of wool.

(i) Military usurpation of power

In the course of his work Kalhaṇa has occasion to describe the terrible evils of the usurpation of power by the military forces of the Crown. For nearly 30 years (904-36 A.D.) an organised body of foot-soldiers called Tantrins was so powerful as to make and unmake kings at their will in the fashion of the Praetorian Guard of the Roman Empire in the early centuries of the Christian era. The kings who were in the service of the Tantrins ousted one another 'like village officials' by offering greater and greater bribes. As the chronicler writes (V 266) with patriotic grief and shame, "In this land, the rulers of which had conquered Kānya-kubja and other (countries), the kings (now) maintained themselves by giving bills of exchange of the Tantrins." It was during this period that the kingdom was overtaken by the severe famine of 917-18 A.D. to which reference has been made above. The callous indifference shown by the evil kings and their ministers is condemned by the chronicler in burning words of contrast with the good old times: "Thus demons of kings led to destruction at that time those subjects who had been dear to Tuṅjina (I), Chandrāpīḍa and other protectors of the people" (V 278). The series of short inglorious reigns during this time is compared by the chronicler (V 279) with 'the bubbles produced in the water by a downpour of rain on a dull day'. The evil lives of licentious queens (V 281-286) who competed for the favour of powerful ministers completed the sombre picture. When at last the power of the Tantrins was broken by a great victory won by king Chakravarman in 936 A.D., the chronicler could exultingly say (V 338-40) that the victor had like a great snake destroyed those evil Tantrins who had like cruel snake-charmers reduced princes 'deserving of respect, unapproachable and of great descent' to helplessness and had wantonly exposed them to public shame.

(j) Feudal anarchy

A potent source of misrule in Kashmir in later times was the rise to power of the Dāmaras, the landholding barons, great and small. Already during the reign of king Avantivarman, reference is made to a powerful member of this class, who rendered himself obnoxious by plundering temple endowments and was deservedly put to death in a summary fashion by the king's faithful minister Śūra. It was with the help of Dāmaras, as Kalhaṇa informs us, that Chakravarman won his great victory over the Tantrins to which reference has been made just now. From the accession of the Lohara dynasty in 1003 A.D. Kalhaṇa's narrative shows how the Dāmaras acquired such military and political influence as to become an unending danger to the royal authority. Harsha made a notable attempt to exterminate this turbulent class, but the attempt cost him his throne and his life. The succeeding reigns down to Kalhaṇa's own time form almost a continuous record of struggle

between the central authority and the *Ḍāmaras*, or else between the different sections of the *Ḍāmaras* themselves, that were aided by the rise of successive pretenders. We shall see later how Kalhaṇa's painful experience of the habitual lawlessness of the *Ḍāmaras* coloured his judgment of this class as a whole.¹⁸

Kalhaṇas character-sketches

In the wide range and variety of its historical characters Kalhaṇa's work is without a rival in the whole body of our ancient historical literature. From the commencement of the historical period of his land the throng of characters—kings, queens, ministers and other officials, territorial nobles, courtiers, parasites, pretenders—that fills the stage of Kalhaṇa's narrative, appears before us in the stark reality of their actual lives and performances. There is throughout no trace of the conventional praise or blame such as is dictated by the masters of rhetoric for the authors of artificial poetry. We propose to illustrate this point by giving a brief retrospect of the period from the beginning of the Utpala dynasty onwards. Avantivarman, the founder of the dynasty, is presented before us as an able ruler, generous towards his subjects (V 18), affectionate towards his relations and followers (V 42) as well as lavish in his pious foundations (V 23 ff.). A pretty anecdote recorded about him (V 17) proves him to be above royal conventions and formalities. The king was served with equal zeal and ability (V. 63) by his minister Śūra who is praised likewise (V 33 ff.) for his patronage of learning and his pious foundations. An anecdote told of him further illustrates his deep loyalty to the king and his strict justice awarded without respect for rank or personal relations. This relates to the story of his summary execution of a powerful *Ḍāmara*, his own favourite, who had roused the king's displeasure by plunder of temple property. The chronicler tells a touching story (V 43 and 124) relating how the king, although a *Vaiṣṇava*, acted as a *Śaiva* out of deference to his *Śaiva* minister, but at the approach of death confessed with folded hands his *Vaiṣṇava* faith to his minister. The illustrious Suyya who shed lustre on the reign by his construction of extensive drainage and irrigation works is fittingly praised by the chronicler for his uncanny skill (cf. V 102: 'He made the different streams, with their waves, which are like the quivering tongues of snakes, move about according to his will just as a conjurer does with the snakes'). He is also mentioned (V 120) for his grant of a village called after his own name to the *Brāhmaṇas*. Śaṅkaravarman, son and successor of Avantivarman, at first won fame as a conqueror and builder, but afterwards turned into a cruel oppressor of his subjects. Great point is given to the author's condemnation of

¹⁸ On the above vide Stein, *op. cit.* Vol. II, App. Note G, *The Ḍāmaras*. To Stein belongs the credit of first

clearly explaining the significance of this term.

the tyrant by an imaginary remonstrance put into the mouth of the noble-hearted Prince Gopālavarman to which the king replies in a brutally cynical speech ending with the words (V 202): "You yourself should grant me today this one boon. May you not after ascending the throne oppress your subjects even more!" Under the weak successors of Gopālavarman the kingdom fell a prey to the Tantrins, the Praetorian Guard of Kashmirian history, to whom reference has been made above. Chakravarman who crushed the power of the Tantrins by a great victory made himself infamous by raising a Chaṇḍāla woman to the rank of Chief Queen and making her relatives and followers his ministers and favourites (cf. V 391: "Robbers as ministers, a Śvapāka woman as queen, Śvapākas as friends: What wonders were left for king Chakravarman to achieve?"). The baseness of the ministers who with a few honourable exceptions stooped to flatter the upstarts and of the degraded Brāhmaṇas who accepted *agrahāras* from the sinful king is justly condemned (V 398-393; 403) by Kalhaṇa. The author's injured Brahmanical pride manifests itself in indignant denunciation of the presumption of the Chaṇḍāla Queen in entering divine temples (V 397-398). When the king at length was justly murdered by some Dāmaras, Kalhaṇa could say that 'the wicked lover of the Śvapāki' was 'killed by robbers like a dog' (V 413). His successor was 'the evil ruler resembling a demon', justly called the 'mad Avanti'. The evil deeds of 'this most degraded of kings' included indulgence in coarse buffooneries, the brutal murder of his father and other relatives, and atrocious cruelties towards women and labourers (V 414-48).

Yaśaskara who was elected to the throne by a Brāhmaṇa assembly after the extinction of the Utpala dynasty is described by Kalhaṇa as a king of great wisdom, ability and justice whose rule was an unmixed blessing to his subjects (VI 6-13). With some inconsistency, however, the same king is elsewhere (VI 70 f.) stigmatised for amassing riches, for treachery in getting rid of Tantrins and for private vices. Kalhaṇa describes with moving pathos the sad end of this king who, afflicted with a painful disease and retiring to a sacred spot to die, was deserted by most of his followers, was robbed by some others and was at length poisoned by those who were anxious to seize the kingdom. Among other characters of this period we may mention the villainous and scheming minister Parvagupta born in a humble writer's family but filled with the unholy ambition of seizing the throne on seeing 'kings who were like worms' ever since the rise of the Tantrins to power (V 421). Instigating the tyrant 'the mad Avanti' to destroy his own family, Parvagupta deceived even the good king Yaśaskara into giving him a high office and repayed his benefactor by robbing him on his death-bed (VI 102-3; 111). Parvagupta found his opportunity after the accession of the childking Saṃgrāmadeva, Yaśaskara's son and successor, when he quickly seized the supreme power and assumed royal honours. Failing to destroy the child by witchcraft, he suddenly attacked the palace,

and killed the king, and seized the throne (VI 121-125). Other base acts recorded of him by the chronicler, included his pandering to Avanti's buffooneries and cruelties (V 420 ff.) and lusting, though in vain, for a noble-minded queen of Yaśaskara (VI 138-144). In the following half-century the most outstanding figure of Kashmirian history was Diddā, Queen of Parvagupta's son and successor Kshemagupta. Descended on her mother's side from the illustrious Śāhi dynasty of Uḍabhaṇḍapura, she gained complete ascendancy over her worthless husband, after whose death she ruled successively as regent for her son and three grandsons and at length by her own right. Cruel and self-indulgent, with a strong touch of feminine inconsistency (cf. VI 193: "The king's mother and guardian, confused in her mind and listening to every body after woman's wont, did not reflect what was true and what not"), of a nature intensely suspicious, not too proud to conciliate disaffected Dāmaras (cf. VI 282: "The Queen, fearing a rebellion, disregarded the shame of humiliation and exerted herself to appease them. How can those who are absorbed by selfishness have a sense of honour?"), with an insatiable thirst for power, she was yet gifted with high political and diplomatic talents, with capacity for firm action (cf. VI 256-58 where she is said to have exterminated 'those treacherous ministers who during sixty years from the year of the Laukika era 3977, had robbed sixteen kings from king Gopālavarman to Abhimanyu of their dignity, lives and riches'), with a short spell of pious devotion towards deities and tender regard for her subject's welfare (cf. VI 295, "From that time forward the wealth which she had acquired by evil acts became purified through her astonishing deeds of piety"; VI 297: "From the time that he had roused in her the priceless affection for her people and she had abandoned her evil ways, the Queen became esteemed by everyone"). Among Diddā's ministers may be mentioned Phalguna, a faithful counsellor of Yaśaskara and Kshemagupta, 'who out-shone all by his counsel, courage, energy and other good qualities' (VI 199), and having nobly sought refuge from the Queen's unjust persecutions in voluntary exile, returned to her service at her call and served her faithfully till his death. Even the Queen felt such respect for his character that she concealed her cruelty and malignity till his death, after which she 'committed hundredfold excesses by open misconduct' (VI 314). An equally attractive and still more honourable character was 'the faithful Naravāhana, the best of ministers' (VI 260), who again and again proved his loyalty and valour by singly fighting the rebels, but was at last driven to commit suicide by the Queen's unjust suspicions. His sad end is said by the chronicler (VI 278) to be befitting a man with a high sense of honour. Less attractive is the figure of Yaśodhara who deserted the rebels to accept the office of Commander-in-Chief from the Queen, and afterwards going over to the enemy's side, was captured and justly punished by his infuriated sovereign (VI 218 ff.). Of a decidedly evil type are the ministers Rakka and Sindhu who poisoned the Queen's

ears against her most faithful servants (VI 233; 267). Sindhu's brother Bhuyya, on the other hand, is praised by the chronicler for encouraging the Queen in her pious acts and rousing in her 'the priceless affection for her people.'

Samgrāmarāja, who ascended the Kashmir throne by Diddā's nomination and became the founder of the Lohara dynasty, is described by the chronicler as indolent and pleasure-loving and yet of sufficient spirit to resent the domination of the all-powerful minister Tuṅga (VII 72). The king disgraced himself by causing the assassination of Tuṅga by base treachery and by conferring offices on wicked and incapable men after the latter's death. Tuṅga who was the son of a Khaśa villager from the neighbouring territory of Paṇotsa and was raised by Diddā's favour to the high office of Prime-Minister, is described by Kalhaṇa as a man of great courage and judgment which failed him in his unfamiliar warfare with Hammīra (Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna) and afterwards in his choice of low-born favourites like the *Kāyasthas* Bhadresvara and Chandramukha to high offices. Harirāja, son of Samgrāmarāja, who enjoyed a short reign of only 22 days is warmly praised by the chronicler for the efficiency and goodness of his rule (VII 129: "He whose orders were never infringed cleared the land of thieves and prohibited the closing of door in the market-street at night"). On the other hand the Queen-mother Śrīlekhā is justly blamed by the chronicler for her licentious character and her unnatural thirst for power (VII 123ff. and 133 ff.). Kalhaṇa's description of Ananta, son and successor of Harirāja, shows us a king possessing high courage in fighting rebellious *Ḍamaras* and tender solicitude for his faithful troops (VII 156 f.), but wasteful and extravagant 'like one born on the throne' (VII 144f., 188f.). Towards the end of his long reign he fell completely under the influence of his Queen Sūryamatī. She at first led him to a virtuous life (cf. VII 201: "Wise Anantadeva surpassed even the *munis* by his devotion to Śiva, his vows, bathings, liberality, morals and other virtues"), and brought him the services of the wise and faithful minister Haladhara and the latter's valiant nephew Bimba (VII 208f.). But the same Queen afterwards induced the king against the advice of his wise ministers to abdicate the throne in favour of their unworthy son Kalaśa. Even when Ananta resumed the royal power, he neglected again and again under the evil influence of his Queen to chastise his son in time. Too late the king realised the baneful consequences of his submission to his wife's will (cf. the reproachful words put into Ananta's mouth, VII 423ff., beginning with the words, "Pride, honour, valour, royal dignity, power, intellect, riches—what is it, alas, that I have not lost by following my wife's will"), and with her counter reproaches ringing in his ears, sought relief in suicide. The Queen Sūryamatī is described by Kalhaṇa as a wise and devoted wife (cf. VII 197 where she is stated to have redeemed out of her own savings the royal throne and diadem taken by a foreign merchant as a security for the king's debt), and a lady of

great piety (cf. VII 180ff. giving a list of her pious foundations and munificent gifts of *agrahāras* to Brāhmaṇas). But all her virtues were brought to naught by her blind love for her unworthy son, which landed both herself and the king in endless miseries and at length forced the latter, as told above, to find refuge in suicide. The Queen nobly atoned for her fault by burning herself on the funeral pyre of her husband amid the lamentations of her people. At the last tragic scene her fine womanly qualities were shown by her eager, though vain, wish to see her son, her sipping the water of the sacred Vitastā for obtaining final deliverance, her solemn curse against "those who have caused the fatal enmity between us two and our son" and, last but not the least, her solemn oath attesting to the purity of her moral character.

King Kalaśa, whose reign is described by the chronicler in great detail, is presented as a mixture of opposites. Led by 'the wretched foreigners' and other evil associates in early youth into shameless debauchery (VII 273 ff.) of which the evil effects were felt even in the king's old age (VII 519 ff.), behaving with base ingratitude towards his doting parents (VII 366 ff.), occasional plunderer of temple endowments (VII 570) and sacrilegious destroyer of divine images (VII 696), he was yet capable of vigilant watchfulness over state affairs (VII 507 ff.), of establishing pious foundations (VII 525 ff.) and of introducing improved fashions of song and dance (VII 606). The very detailed account (VII 617 ff.) of the relations between Kalaśa and his eldest son Prince Harsha in the years immediately preceding the king's death is interesting as illustrating the mixed feelings of tenderness and suspicion which they entertained towards each other. The weak side of Kalaśa's character was shown by his retiring to die in the Mārtanda shrine, although he had been heretofore a worshipper of Śiva and had performed *tāntric* rites under the direction of *gurus* (cf. VII 712: "The pride which he had before shown in the instructions of his *gurus* was rendered ridiculous by such cowardly submission more befitting miserly wretches and the like."¹⁹ Kalaśa was fortunate enough to be served by a succession of able ministers who made the king's power feared and respected by the neighbouring hill *rājās*, eight of whom assembled to do him honour at his capital (VII 587). Among these ministers we have king with exemplary loyalty sought refuge from the king's unjust suspicion in a voluntary exile, the resourceful Vāmana whose wonderful official acts were remembered even down to Kalhaṇa's day and who alone cared to perform the king's funeral rites after his death, the brave Malla who won high fame by his successful invasion of Uraśā (VII 585 ff.), the valiant but irritable Kandarpa whom Kalaśa could only with difficulty persuade to stick to his office and who lived to distinguish himself by his capture of Rājapurī during Harsha's reign, and being

¹⁹ In connexion with the above, Stein's mention (*op. cit.* VII 712n) of Kalaśa's

late conversion to Vaiṣṇava worship is a slip.

driven to exile by his ungrateful master was remembered by the latter with regret in the last days of his misery. Among the king's parasites was the villainous Viśavaṭṭa who first urged Harsha to kill his father (VII 617 ff.), and then betrayed the Prince (VII 629) and was justly executed by the latter after his accession.

Kalhaṇa describes Utkarsha, son and successor of Kalaśa, as a mean and miserly character whose 'only daily occupation was to inspect the hoards of the treasury and to weigh them' (VII 756), and who thereby earned the just reprobation of his own step-mothers and his brother as well as all respectable citizens (VII 758-60; 773-74). Among his ministers was the cruel but faithful Nonaka who advised Harsha's execution (as he had done in the last reign), and afterwards upbraided the king for his folly in disregarding his advice (VII 782 ff.). After Utkarsha's death Nonaka was imprisoned and executed by Harsha who, however, regretted the death of 'a man of a large mind and devoted to his master' (VII 890).

For sheer mixture of contradictory qualities the character of Harsha, Utkarsha's elder brother and successor, stands unrivalled. In an eloquent passage (VII 868 ff.) prefacing the account of the reign, Kalhaṇa describes the incomprehensible character of this king which was quite unlike that of other kings dealt with by him. The story of king Harsha, he explains, 'has seen the rise of all enterprises and yet tells of all failures', 'brings to light all kinds of settled plans and yet shows the absence of all policy', 'displays an excessive assertion of the ruling power and yet has witnessed excessive disregard of orders', 'tells of excessive abundance of liberality and of equally excessive persistence in confiscation', 'gives delight by an abundant display of compassion and shocks by the superabundance of murders', 'is rendered charming by the redundancy of pious works and soiled by the superabundance of sins', 'is attractive on all sides and yet repulsive, worthy of praise and deserving of blame.' Even as a Prince, Harsha is described (VII 609-611) as 'possessed of exceptional powers,' 'knowing all languages,' 'a good poet in all tongues,' 'a depository of all learning,' who patronised distinguished men from other lands. Elsewhere (VII 942) he is mentioned as the author of songs of such tender pathos that they were appreciated even during Kalhaṇa's lifetime. That these encomiums were well deserved is proved by the almost similar terms in which the contemporary Kashmirian poet Bilhana writes of Harsha in the *Vikramāṅkacharita*. Kalhaṇa describes in striking language Harsha's extraordinary physical frame and commanding presence (VII 874-878) as well as the splendour and brilliance of the king's court (VII 881 ff.). We are expressly told that Harsha introduced new and elegant fashions of dress and ornament (VII 921 ff.), and that he borrowed a coin-type from the Deccan. The author also speaks (VII 934 ff.) of Harsha's lavish patronage of men of learning which made even Bilhana enjoying the splendid patronage of the contemporary Chālukya king sigh for his favour. But such high praise

was not to be bestowed upon the king for long. With well-deserved severity Kalhaṇa exposes (VII 1001 ff.) the perversity of the king who led by evil counsellors drove his valiant and faithful Commander-in-Chief Kandarpa into exile, who executed a number of young princes without any cause, whose wholesale confiscation of temple treasures and destruction of divine images earned for him the designation of a Turushka, who not content with his accumulated treasures oppressed the people with imposts of all kinds. Other acts of folly mentioned (VII 1120 ff.) by Kalhaṇa (which, as he himself says, would appear incredible to posterity) included an unholy passion for the beautiful Chālukya Queen, the worship of slave-girls posing as goddesses and so forth. His want of moral sense 'as befitted the son of king Kalaśa' was exhibited (VII 1147 ff.) by the liberties he took with his step-mothers and sisters, his partaking of pig's flesh etc. The king's cowardice was conspicuously displayed in his failure to take two successive fortresses, while his morbid cruelty was shown by his imposing heavy fines upon the people already afflicted with plague, flood and famine, and still more by his ferocious persecution of Dāmaras. Well might the chronicler state that some demon had descended in the form of Harsha 'to destroy this land hallowed by gods, *tīrthas* and *ṛishis*' (VII 1243). The chronicler goes on to mention some of the king's peculiar habits including 'cruelty, excessive conduct, meanness and pleasure in doing things which befitted the god of death', which were 'like those of a goblin'.

The author's moving account of the last days of Harsha, which is one of the master-pieces of historical description, gives us in studiously simple language the picture of a king whom an unending series of misfortunes had bereft of all resolution and wisdom and even of personal courage (cf. VII 1454: "His wisdom, bold resolution and decision vanished all at once in his misfortune, when the time of his ruin had approached") and the tragedy of whose fall was redeemed only by his tender affection for his noble son Bhoja, his belated remorse for the wrong done to his subjects and his loyal servants in former years, and last but not the least, the heroism which he displayed at the time of his death. Kalhaṇa tells us how Harsha surrounded by his foes and deserted by most of his troops neglected the wise advice of his few faithful ministers to retire to the family strong-hold of Lohara (VII 1386 ff.), how he failed to muster up courage to seek his own death (VII 1407), how at the sight of the awful tragedy of his queens and princesses burning themselves in the royal palace after his own defeat at the city bridge-head he continued muttering to himself an ancient verse ("The fire which has risen from the burning pains of the subjects does not go out until it has consumed the king's race, fortune and life" VII 1581), how he made his last faithful minister Chanpaka leave his side in a vain quest for his departed son (VII 1587), how when deserted even by the *rājaputras* and denied shelter in every house of note in the capital he failed to remember a faithful Dāmara who alone had kept faithful 'like a true wife never

turning the eyes towards anyone else' (VII 1630-31), how when he heard the news of the death of his well-beloved son he in his misery fancied that he saw the son 'as a child with his limbs adorned with strings of pearls and resting on his own breast (VII 1675), how he gently upbraided his faithful attendant who reminded him of the selfish indifference of his subjects in a speech of ineffable tenderness for his lost son (cf. VII 1687: "If I myself after hearing that my son, the life of my life, is dead, yet remain here as if all were right, how can anyone else be blamed for showing indifference?"), and how at the last moment, finding himself surrounded by his foes to whom he had been basely betrayed, he sold his life dearly, showing even at the end the magnanimity worthy of a great prince (VII 1702 and 1705 ff.). At the close of his narrative Kalhaṇa sums up the causes of Harsha's failure in words which can hardly be regarded as adequate. For Harsha's failure, according to the author (VII 1715-16), was only due to his aversion to battle, or else his want of independent judgment.²⁰

Of the members of Harsha's family we may first mention the bold and resolute Prince Bhoja, 'foremost of the fighters', who repulsed Sussala's attack on the capital (VII 1525 ff.) and afterwards met a heroic death in fighting against his treacherous servants (VII 1654 ff.). Mention may also be made of the heroic Śāhi and other Queens who burnt themselves in 'the four-pillared pavilion of the palace of a hundred gates' when Uchchala with his Dāmaras burst into the city (VII 1579). We may, lastly, refer to Harsha's bold and impetuous brother Prince Vijayamalla who helped his release from prison and accession to the throne by a timely rising, and who afterwards, when led into treason by the king's unjust persecution, fought his way with his brave wife through the royal forces only to be killed by an avalanche.

Among the king's ministers we may first speak of the cunning city-prefect Vijayasimha who took the decisive step in raising Harsha to the throne and putting Utkarsha under arrest. A very attractive figure is Chandrarāja who justified his high descent by accepting the dangerous post of Commander-in-Chief which none else of the frightened ministers would accept in the king's last desperate fight with the brothers Uchchala and Sussala. Winning the first fight and killing the enemy's general, he afterwards found himself deserted by his troops, and maintaining the unequal combat for long, was killed in battle (VII 1499 ff.). With his death, as Kalhaṇa justly observes, vanished Harsha's last hopes. An equally attractive personality is Ānanda who, raised to the position of Governor by Harsha, first distinguished himself in a successful fight with Uchchala, and afterwards, being deserted by his troops, was cap-

²⁰ For ref. to Harsha in *Vikramānka-charita* vide Stein (*op. cit.* VII 609-10n) referring to a number of verses ascribed to a certain Harshadeva in a number of Sanskrit anthologies. Kalhaṇa's ref.

to Harsha's coin-type is supported by the discovery of the king's unique gold-coinage imitated from the Deccan models (Cunningham, *Coins of Mediaeval India* n. 26).

tured and put to death. He was, as Kalhaṇa aptly says (VII 1376), 'the only one to purchase glory at the expense of his body among king Harsha's servants who were characterised by treachery and timidity'. His mother, 'one of those virtuous women who have borne sons worthy of praise for devotion to their lord's service', found relief for grief for her only son in mounting the funeral pyre (VII 1580). A touching story told by the chronicler (VII 1381 ff) illustrates at once the mother's strong affection for her son and proud acquiescence in his devotion to the State service—both befitting a Roman matron of the early Republican Period—and the king's high appreciation of the son's loyalty. Other attractive figures of the same period are the high minister Chaṇpaka, father of Kalhaṇa, who could be persuaded only with great difficulty by the deluded king to leave him (VII 1587), and the faithful attendant Prayāga who stayed with the king till the end and was killed by his side (VII 1622 ff.). Among the king's evil ministers was 'the wretch' Loṣṭha-dhara who put into the king's head the idea of confiscating temple treasures (VII 1080 ff.), the vile Madana who accepted the post of Chamberlain to the Chālukya Queen in effigy (VII 1125), and the villainous Sunna, prefect of police, who completed a long career of treachery by bringing Uchchala to the capital and deserting the king in his last days (VII 1597-99).²¹

From Kalhaṇa's account of the reign of the next king Uchchala, he appears before us as a shrewd, wise and energetic Prince devoted to the welfare of his subjects. Faced at the beginning of his reign with formidable difficulties which Kalhaṇa vividly describes (VIII 7), he met them with ability and success. He conciliated his headstrong brother Sussala by crowning him as the king of the family possession of Lohara, while he brought the unruly Dāmaras under control by a mixture of force and diplomacy. Kalhaṇa quotes him (VIII 45-47) as taking for his motto two lessons, namely, accessibility to his people from morning to evening in his palace and constant preparedness for suppressing revolts. It was no doubt in accordance with the second principle that he showed wonderful energy in repulsing the invasion of Sussala and getting rid of a number of pretenders. When the most formidable of his rivals Bhikshāchara, son of Bhoja and grandson of Harsha, fled from his court to the protection of the distant king of Malava, Uchchala prudently concluded treaties with Princes on the route to prevent the pretender's entry into Kashmir (VIII 231). Uchchala's beneficent measures for the welfare of his subjects, carried out no doubt in accor-

²¹ When a recent writer (Ram Chandra Kak in *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, p. 24) compares the condition of Kashmir in the 10th and 11th centuries A. D. with that of Italy under Pope Alexander VI and Caesar Borgias with this difference that the evil lives of the Italian Popes and their satellites, unlike

those of the Kashmirian kings, "were at any rate relieved by the display of commanding talents", he forgets the recorded instances (as indicated above) of noble and heroic characters as well as of commanding talents in Kalhaṇa's narrative of those times.

dance with his first principle, are stated by the chronicler (VIII 64) to follow from his one great virtue, viz. indifference to wealth. A list of restorations of old temples and images as well as the renovation of the royal throne of Jayāpiḍa (VIII 77 ff.) attested to the piety and nobility of the kings character. In this connection Kalhaṇa quotes a celebrated judgment of the king in a difficult law-suit to illustrate his uncanny wisdom which he 'must have obtained from the body of Śeṣhanāga' (VIII 122). In an earlier passage (VIII 85 ff.) Kalhaṇa describes with great relish the king's 'another merit which stood foremost among all his virtues', namely, his humiliation of the hated class of *Kāyasthas*, those 'plagues of the people.' While allowing so much praise to the king, Kalhaṇa mentions (VIII 163 ff.) to his discredit, his jealousy of greatness, his rashness of speech, his love of sanguinary combats among his followers, and lastly, his arrogant and fickle temper. In describing the king's last days the chronicler dwells on his fatal delusion in trusting himself to the company of some base conspirators who surprised him in his palace and killed him after a resistance worthy of his character.

Of other characters of the reign we may first mention Queen Jayāmati of unknown origin and very questionable antecedents (VII 1460-62), who secured through the king's favour 'the rare privilege of occupying one-half of his throne'. As Queen she distinguished herself by 'kindness, charm of manners, liberality, regard for virtuous people and wisdom, and helpfulness for the needy and the distressed' (VIII 83). She made noble use of her riches by founding a *Vihāra* with a *Maṭha* which she called after the king's name. Superseded in her husband's favour by a younger rival, she yet burnt herself on a funeral pyre after the king's tragic death (VIII 363).

Kalhaṇa draws a lively picture (VIII 256 ff.) of the gang of conspirators who took part in Uchchala's murder. They consisted of the brothers Chhuḍḍa, Raḍḍa and so forth, descended from a common soldier but filled with the ambition of seizing the throne, and stung to fury by the king's insulting words and dismissal from their offices, the villainous *Kāyastha* Saḍḍa who put the idea of treason into the heads of the brothers and was driven to desperation by being discharged from office for misconduct, the noble Bhogasena, the kings 'best friend', who being insulted by the king and taken into confidence by the conspirators attempted, though in vain, to convey to him a friendly warning and remained a passive spectator at the time of the murder. Kalhaṇa takes special delight in narrating how the usurper Raḍḍa with his accomplices met a well-deserved death at the hands of the avenging Dāmara Gargachandra (VIII 342 ff.).

Salhaṇa, the half-brother and successor of Uchchala, who was next raised to the throne by 'the king-maker', the powerful Dāmara Gargachandra, is described by Kalhaṇa as a thoroughly worthless king (VIII 417). He showed his utter want of judgment in entrusting the important office of 'Lord of the Gate' to a relative 'fitted for assemblies of

ascetics', who 'declared that he would ward off the dangers from Sussala by uttering his own magic spell a hundred thousand times at his approach' (VIII 422-423). The king being a 'mere shadow', the court was dependent on Garga for life and death. Salhaṇa's short inglorious reign, which resembled a 'a long evil dream', was closed by deposition at the hands of his half-brother Sussala. (VIII 449).

Kalhaṇa introduces his account of the next reign by drawing (VIII 482 ff.) a striking comparison and contrast between the character of the two brothers Uchchala and Sussala. Sussala's character, he says, was the same as that of his elder brother with some features more, and some less, strongly marked in himself. The contrast, which extends to minute shades of differences (cf. VIII 488: "Though their wrath was alike in appearance, yet that of his elder brother resembled the poison of a mad dog and his own that of a bee") is summed up by the author in the statement (VIII 499) that Sussala 'surpassed his elder brother in all qualities excepting only liberality, disregard of wealth and easy accessibility'. Kalhaṇa's detailed account of the reign which falls into two equal periods divided by the short interval of Bhiksāchāra's usurpation, bears out his somewhat partial verdict only in part. In the beginning of his reign Sussala is described as pacifying the country by a mixture of force and guile, which Kalhaṇa seems to condone, applied against Gargachandra and other powerful subjects. In a short time, however, he employed wicked *Kāyasthas* to acquire 'sordid gains' (VIII 560 ff.). The king proceeded to invite fresh troubles for himself by recklessly provoking the hostilities of Dāmaras and officers (VIII 650), while his ingratitude drove even his brave and faithful Commander-in-Chief into disaffection (VIII 654 ff.). Defeated by the rebellious Dāmaras, the king foolishly perpetrated fresh cruelties which are justly censured by the chronicler (VIII 681). When at length the Dāmaras rose in revolt under the pretender Bhikshāchāra and defeated the royal forces, Sussala prudently sent his family to the Lohara castle, a step which, as Kalhaṇa notes (VIII 721), made possible the revival of his fortunes. At the beginning of the rebels' siege of the capital, the king showed such wonderful heroism as to rouse the admiration of the chronicler (cf. VIII 755: "Though the king had before invaded the territories of various chiefs, yet the highest reward of his arm's might was the protection of the city"). But the machinations of some 'villainous Brāhmaṇas' and *Purohitas* of sacred places together with the desertion and mutiny of his troops and the indifference of his subjects at length deprived him of all his resolution (cf. VIII 806), and he sought safety in flight to Lohara.

In 'the wonderful battle' near Parnotsa on the Kashmir frontier, which was the talk of eye-witnesses in Kalhaṇa's time, Sussala with his few troops gained a glorious victory over the combined Kashmirian, Khaśa and Turushka forces of the pretender, and thus "washed off his

burning disgrace for the first time" (VIII 917). After his restoration Sussala in his distrust of his countrymen gave his chief confidence to foreigners, thus driving, according to the chronicler, numbers of his adherents into the enemy's camp. That this censure is a little unmerited is proved by the king's reinstating a brave officer called Yaśorāja (VIII 117) whom he had unjustly driven into exile, only to experience his treacherous desertion to the enemy's side. In the following years the king, helped almost alone by his faithful foreigners, displayed such heroism in repulsing his numerous enemies as to extort high praise of the author (VIII 1199-1200). On one of the critical occasions the king was so much afflicted with sorrow for the many calamities of his people including a great fire and famine at Śrinagar that he brought out his son from Lohara and crowned him king, a step which he quickly retracted. A touching anecdote told by the chronicler during this crisis (VIII 1188 ff.) illustrates at once the king's sublime patriotism and a foreign officer's supreme devotion to his master. Accosted by Kamaliya, son of Lavarāja a chief in the Ṭakka land (Central Punjab), the king told him that he would do 'to-day what king Bhijja, that proud grandfather of yours, did for his country's sake in the battle with Hammira' (the last term probably stands for one of Sultan Mahmud's successors). Concluding his short and spirited address with words of burning patriotism, the king declared, "Is there any person holding a place among self-respecting men who would abandon his country at the end without having wetted it with the blood of his body just as the tiger does not leave his skin without having wetted it with his blood?". When the king advanced to the fight, the noble Kamaliya stopped him by saying, "While there are servants, it is not fit for kings to proceed in front". In the last crisis of his life Sussala committed the fatal mistake, which the chronicler finds inexplicable in a man of such extraordinary vigilance (VIII 1276-78), of giving his full confidence to a low-born traitor who ended by killing him in the palace when he was completely off his guard. The king's body, shamefully abandoned by his troops and his relatives, was mutilated and carried off by the traitors.

We have a pleasing picture of Sussala's 'beloved consort' Meghamāñjari, daughter of king Vijayapāla, and daughter's daughter of the Lord of Kāliñjara who had brought her up with tender care in place of a son (VIII 204-205). "In her were combined love with tenderness, cheerful speech with dignity and cleverness with experience" (VIII 1219). She had started to join her husband when he was plunged in a series of misfortunes, but she died on the way being worn out by the disastrous news from the king. Four faithful female attendants and a humble cook of her household followed the well-beloved queen to death.

Kalhana introduces his general character-sketch (VIII 1549 ff.) of the contemporary king Jayasimha by justly remarking that the traits of complex characters can only be understood by references to the preceding and following facts and also to the detailed narrative of events. He

also notices the opportunity which the study of a contemporary reign affords for impartial judgment. In the immediately following lines he seems to point out amid some conventional praise that the king's character was a blend of virtues and faults, but that it was unfair to forget that the latter were outweighed by the former. Kalhaṇa's lengthy narrative of the reign helps us to fill in the details of the picture sketched so broadly and imperfectly above. At the time of his father's death he found himself destitute of troops, surrounded by half-hearted ministers, with his father's murderers still at large, and with the pretender Bhikshāchāra preparing to march on the capital. From this danger he extricated himself by a combination of politic generosity, resolute action and cunning diplomacy, so that in four months' time he punished his father's murderers, drove out the pretender and brought the whole kingdom under his rule (VIII 1544). Yet, as Kalhaṇa very properly remarks (VIII 1545 ff.), the citizens were without means, the land was overrun by numerous Dāmaras 'who were like kings', the pretender was firmly established at a short distance, the counsellors and feudatories were seditious and the royal servants were solely bent on perfidy. At this juncture the king, under the influence of evil counsellors whom Kalhaṇa strongly condemns (VIII 1615-16), drove his brave and faithful general Sujji by a series of insults into exile. When, however, Bhikshāchāra arrived at a Khaśa frontier fort for a fresh invasion of Kashmir, the king and his minister Lakshmaka used their diplomatic weapons with such effect that the pretender was deserted by his Dāmara allies and was at last treacherously murdered by the Khaśas. No sooner was the king delivered from his most dangerous adversary than he was faced with a new and formidable rebellion, that of his uncle Loṭhana, who had been kept a prisoner at the Lohara castle, but was now set free and crowned king by the mutinous garrison. The king's extraordinary fortitude on hearing of this great disaster is justly praised by the chronicler (VIII 1798-1810). But he displayed a singular want of judgment (VIII 1838-39) in choosing a wrong season for sending the relief expedition with the result that the royal forces were driven in retreat from Lohara and the minister Lakshmaka was surprised and captured by the rebels. Wisely recalling Sujji from exile and taking advantage of the rebels' internal dissensions, the king was able with Sujji's help to recover Lohara after it had been abandoned by the cowardly pretender Mallārjuna. In a short time the king showed his weakness for evil counsels and his stupidity (VIII 2032-33) by turning against the faithful Sujji whom he caused to be assassinated by base treachery—an act for which he is severely, though indirectly, condemned (VIII 2381) by the chronicler. When the pretender Mallārjuna, aided by the powerful Dāmara Koshtheśvara again rose in revolt, the king by his resolute action was able to capture both of them and throw them into prison. At this point Kalhaṇa describes a series of beneficent measures of the king (including the construction and restoration of temples, the encouragement of

scholars and the rebuilding of the capital) in terms of somewhat extravagant praise (cf. VIII 2376: "The king whose mind is all-pervading and steadfast has obtained the foremost rank among the virtuous by his pious actions"; *ibid* 2400: "What had not been accomplished in regard to consecration of shrines etc. and other pious works during the time of the illustrious Lalitāditya, Avantivarman and other great monarchs, that has now been achieved"). Summing up the king's achievements, Kalhaṇa says (VIII 2446), "He restored to this land which owing to the baseness of the times was like a decayed forest, wealth, population and habitations". On the other hand, as the chronicler is careful to tell us (VIII 2480), the want of judgment which the king had shown in driving Sujji into exile was further manifested by his decision, at the advice of a mere boon companion whom he had unwisely raised to the office of prime minister, to send an incompetent commander against the Daradas. The only result of this ill-advised expedition was that the powerful Darada minister fomented a revolt of the pretender Loṭhana which led to a general rising against the king. The pretenders Loṭhana and Vighraharāja having taken refuge at the inaccessible castle of Śīrahśīlā already mentioned, the generals sent against them lost heart and pressed for a peace. But the king's splendid resolution (cf. his spirited instructions VIII 2543 ff. to his general ending with the brave words, "Therefore cease to remain mere onlookers and lay siege to the whole castle. Let our life-time pass, as well as theirs, in this enterprise") in continuing the attack was rewarded with the surrender of the two pretenders by the Dāmara leader. The king showed his generosity by his kind, if contemptuous, treatment of the prisoners. When the third pretender Bhoja after repeatedly experiencing the defeat of his Dāmara and other allies as well as their baseness and treachery made a voluntary surrender, he was treated by the king with the generosity befitting his own rank and high character. The submission of Bhoja was followed by a general pacification of the kingdom, which gives Kalhaṇa an opportunity to mention (VIII 3316) another list of pious acts of the king. The king's tender regard for his faithful servants is touchingly illustrated by his attending the minister Dhanya on his death-bed (VIII 3329). In the same connection Kalhaṇa mentions (VIII 3322) how the king appointed Sañjapāla's brave son to his father's office of Commander-in-Chief after his death.

Among the members of Jayasimha's family Kalhaṇa mentions with high praise (VIII 2433 ff.) Queens Ratnādevī, and Raḍḍādevī, for their pious foundations. Of the latter he says (VIII 3388) with evident exaggeration, "By her numerous sacred foundations and restorations this wise and clever queen has outstepped, O wonder, even the lame Diddā". The Chief Queen Kalhanikā who is praised (VIII 3063 ff.) for her magnanimity and other good qualities, distinguished herself by mediating between Prince Bhoja and the king at the time of the former's surrender.

Among the pretenders for the throne who lived during this period

the first place belongs to Bhikshācara, grandson of king Harsha. His repeated efforts to gain the throne kept the kingdom in a state of turmoil during the reign of Sussala and the early part of Jayasimha's reign. When he temporarily obtained the throne after Sussala's flight from the capital, he proved himself utterly unfit for his high position. A tool in the hands of the powerful Dāmaras and ministers, he neglected state affairs and devoted himself to low pleasures 'fit only for a market-slave' (VIII 870). Driven from his throne by a popular reaction in Sussala's favour, Bhikshācara showed such unexpected vigour in his subsequent fights with the new king as to earn the chronicler's enthusiastic praise (cf. VIII 1014: "In the two armies which counted many strong men, there was not one who could face Bhikshu when he roamed about in battle"; *ibid* 1017: "There was no other hero anywhere like Bhikshācara who could protect the troops in critical positions, bear up with fatigues, never felt tired and never boast"). So strongly is Kalhaṇa impressed with his sudden improvement in the pretender's character that he explains the want of opportunity for learning state-craft as the cause of Bhikshācara's failure as king (VIII 1030). After Sussala's assassination the pretender showed his implacable hatred by sending the murdered king's head to Rājapuri, for which reason he is justly censured by the chronicler (VIII 1463). How nobly Bhikshācara redeemed the misfortunes due to adverse destiny by his last heroic fight against his treacherous assailants will be told in another place.

Of the other pretenders to the throne Loṭhana, who obtained the stronghold of Lohara by an unexpected turn of good fortune, failed to show much worth. Mallārjuna who supplanted Loṭhana is described by the chronicler (VIII 1979) as possessing not a single good quality. While in possession of Lohara he wasted the accumulated treasures on low favourites. Afterwards he showed his meanness of spirit by agreeing to pay tribute to the king, and then by abandoning Lohara without a fight. Captured at length by the royal forces, he made himself thoroughly contemptible by his cowardice. We are told, for instance, how before surrendering to 'the Lord of the Gate' he made the latter give him to everybody's disgust a solemn assurance for his personal safety, how on his way to the capital he behaved 'just like an animal' without any reflection of any kind occupying his mind, and how at last he abjectly presented himself to the king and betrayed his former friends (VIII 2296; 2299, 2311). In sharp contrast with Mallārjuna's character is that of the pretender Bhoja, son of king Salhaṇa who is described as a brave, wise and high-minded prince. After his voluntary surrender to the king, Bhoja repaid his benefactor's generosity with such devoted service as to win the latter's complete confidence (VIII 3254 ff.).

Among the ministers of Jayasimha Lakshmaka occupies the first place for shrewd and successful diplomacy. Holding the office of Chamberlain under Bhikshācara, he narrowly escaped imprisonment to join Sussala (VIII 911). After Sussala's tragic death he immediately

joined Jayasimha who made him his chief counsellor because of his skill in winning over the people (VIII 1382). He occupied the dominant position in the king's council-chamber because of his address in sowing dissensions among the Dāmaras (VIII 1483-85). While selfishly driving his rival Sujji into exile by poisoning the king's ears against him, Lakshmaka by his clever diplomacy prevented Sujji's projected alliance with Somapāla the chief of Rājapuri (VIII 1647). Lakshmaka's last service was to win back for his master the brave Sujji from exile (VIII 1982 ff.).

Of the other ministers the Dāmaras Pañchachandra and Shashthachandra (sons of the king-maker Gargachandra), Rilhaṇa, Dhanya, the two Udayas and Sañjapāla, are mentioned again and again for acts of conspicuous courage in the king's service. The two Dāmaras fully justified the traditional loyalty of their family to the royal house (cf. VIII 2780: 'Not one has been born in Sūryavarmachandra's lineage who has not done good service to those born of Malla's race'). Of Rilhaṇa we are told that finding himself deserted by his troops in a fight with a rebel Dāmara leader, he scorned to join in the general flight, but boldly flung himself almost alone upon the enemy whom he forced to retire to the forest. The magnificent speech put into the mouth of the general on this occasion does honour to his loyalty and courage (cf. VIII 2819: "Shame on the life of him who though a servant fails in his tasks"; *ibid.*, 1823: "Those who give up their lives in battle feel dejection only in the beginning, but subsequently enjoy the highest satisfaction of obtaining that happiness which is called absolute bliss"). Another attractive aspect of the minister's character is presented in the chronicler's enthusiastic description of his pious gifts (VIII 3364 ff.). Dhanya who had been a faithful adherent of Sussala joined Jayasimha at the beginning of his reign and was gradually raised to the high office of Chief Justice. Driven into exile by Sujji's influence, he was recalled by his master after that unfortunate general's death. He continued to serve the king in successive fights with pretenders and rebels till his death. Praising his exceptional worth Kalhaṇa says (VIII 3326) that he had 'singly borne the weight of the king's affairs during the troubles from Bhikshu's death to Bhoja's defeat'. Sañjapāla who had taken a leading part in besieging Salhaṇa at the capital and placing Sussala on the throne showed conspicuous courage in fighting the rebel king-maker Gargachandra (VIII 511). Even after his ungrateful master had sent him into exile Sañjapāla showed his 'high honesty' in going abroad instead of joining the rebels (VIII 558). Recalled by Jayasimha Sañjapāla showed his loyalty as well as his high sense of honour by betraying Sujji's intentions to the king, while refusing to kill the latter by treachery (VIII 2086 ff.). In the course of these operations he is said to have addressed the king with the noble words, "I do not pay attention to family relations, if affairs of State are in their way. My attachment is to my Lord, in whose service I count my life as grass". After Sujji's murder Sañjapāla bravely fought against his partisans, losing his right

arm in the battle (VIII 2164-2166). Raised to the rank of Commander-in-Chief by his grateful master, he rendered excellent service by capturing the Dāmara rebel Koshṭheśvara and by rescuing the general Rilhaṇa from a dangerous position (VIII 2270; 2839). Rashly attacking another Dāmara rebel Trillaka in spite of the desertion of his troops, he displayed conspicuous courage alone with his two sons, but was completely routed (VIII 3280). In remembrance of his high services, the king appointed his brave son to his office after his death (VIII 3322).

Sketches of social types

Kalhaṇa's skilful pen helps to bring before our eyes vivid pictures of classes and types of his countrymen with their characteristic strength and weakness. As regards the people in general, his views partake of their usual impartial character. Repeatedly in his work Kalhaṇa gives instances of touching sympathy of the people with the afflictions in the royal family—witness his pathetic descriptions of the people's lamentations at the final departure of Ananta and Sūryamatī from the capital (VII 349-50) as well as at the self-immolation of Sūryamatī (VII 480) and of Uchchala's queens (VIII 369). The author also records, but with little sympathy, the people's lamentations for the unworthy pretender Mallārjuna when he was carried as a captive to the capital (VIII 2300-2307). In this connection Kalhaṇa expresses by means of two illustrations taken from the *Mahābhārata* the profound truth that the judgment on characters must vary according to changing circumstances. Indeed the chronicler shows by repeated instances how the people's transference of sympathy from the reigning king to a rival was justified in some cases. This applies for instance to the people's preference of the generous Harsha to his mean and parsimonious brother king Utkarsha (VII 773-74). Similarly justifiable, according to the chronicler's own description (VII 1198-1200), was the preference shown later to the brothers Uchchala and Sussala (whose valour alone saved the Kashmirian army from utter destruction by the Daradas) over the cowardly king Harsha (who had just failed ignominiously in the siege of a fort of Rājapuri). Even after the change of sentiment in favour of Uchchala and Sussala the people, soothed by Harsha's proclamation of general amnesty, rallied round the king and helped him to repulse the invader (VII 1332 ff.). On the other hand, the chronicler unhesitatingly condemns the unreasoning fickleness of the people who in Sussala's reign longed for the pretender Bhikshāchara (VIII 796 ff.) and after the latter's accession sighed for Sussala's return (VIII 893 ff.). As the author sagely comments (VIII 896), "In a moment they show enmity, and in a moment again attachment. The vulgar people, just like animals, do not require any reason for their actions."

In the course of his narrative Kalhaṇa has occasion several times to mention instances of the abject cowardice of the Kashmirian soldiery.

Thus, speaking of the desertion of the forces of the Governor Ānanda in the fight with Uchchala, Kalhaṇa says that they abandoned their equipment 'as if they had been helpless animals' (VII 1374). Again, he justly dwells on the baseness of the Kashmirian soldiery who deserted Bhikshāchara to join Sussala after being defeated at 'the wonderful battle' at Parnotsa (VIII 922). The chronicler's highest scorn is reserved (VIII 1322 ff.) for the cowardly gang of royal relatives and troops who after Sussala's murder basely took to flight, leaving the king's body to be mutilated and carried off by the ruffianly conspirators. As the author ruefully observes, his pen, although hardened by recording names and deeds of numbers of rogues from Harsha's time onwards, is unable to name those 'worse than wicked' persons concerned in this base act. The chronicler contents himself by saying that with one honourable exception whom he duly mentions by name, the whole princely (*Rājaputra*) class covered themselves with disgrace. "The king's relatives with fat bellies, who had received his favours, scarcely ventured to look at the corpse." With the exception of two Brāhmaṇas and a chief whom Kalhaṇa mentions by name, all the troops fled in ignominious panic. Another instance of such base desertion is recorded to their discredit in Kalhaṇa's account of the last days of Harsha. "Even those *Rājaputras* Anantapāla and the rest, who claim descent from the thirty-six families and who in their pride would not concede a higher position to the Sun himself, they too left him step by step and their horses disappeared in the dense darkness" (VII 1617-18).²²

As regards the class of Dāmaras or territorial lords, we have already seen how they constituted a constant menace to the peace and tranquillity of the kingdom specially from Harsha's time onwards. Kalhaṇa's

²² On the other hand Kalhaṇa remembers some individual members of this class who distinguished themselves as much by their heroism as by their loyalty in their master's service. The anecdote told of the *Rājaputra* Bijja, an attendant of Prince Kalaśa, at the interview between the angry king Ananta and the Prince (cf. Bijja's bold words VII 324; "O king, though the foremost of the proud men, do you not know that men of honour should never break the great vow of keeping their self-respect?"; *ibid* 325:—"How can I as a *Rājaputra*, when I have taken my pay and carry arms, abandon my master in these straits while life is in me?") does honour at once to his superhuman courage and his touching devotion. Of the brothers Prajñi and Sujji who repeatedly distinguished themselves by their high valour in king Sussala's service, the chronicler writes with enthusiastic admiration

(VIII 1150). Immediately after Sussala's murder Sujji joined Jayasimha at the capital after skilfully eluding the enemy and brought victory to the king's cause. At the battle of the Gambhīra river where Sujji gained a glorious victory over a formidable coalition of Dāmara rebels, he showed such conspicuous bravery as to deserve the chronicler's highest praise (VIII 1498—1503). This great victory, as Kalhaṇa very properly notes (VIII 1156), secured Jayasimha in possession of the kingdom. Driven by the king's hostility into exile, Sujji sullied his good name by joining the pretender Loṭhana at Lohara (VIII 1862). But he showed a chivalrous magnanimity in his treatment of the captive Lakshmaka who had been the cause of his ruin (VIII 1893). Recalled by the king, Sujji distinguished himself by receiving the surrender of Lohara.

bitter experience of the turbulence and lawlessness of this class led him (VIII 7 etc.) to apply to them the characteristic epithet of 'robbers' (*dasyus*). The avarice as well as boorishness of this class is well illustrated by Kalhaṇa's picturesque description of their brief spell of power during the misrule of the usurper Bhikshachara (VIII 855-857). At the beginning of the reign of Jayasimha they betrayed their utter lack of patriotism and even of decency (VIII 1493-94) by offering the throne to Somapāla of Rājapurī who was 'no better than a brute animal' in the hope of monopolising the power for themselves. Afterwards when they proceeded to the capital to offer their submission to the king, they showed their vulgar taste in an extravagant display (VIII 1535). Elsewhere Kalhaṇa, while praising a Dāmara's wife of Kshatriya family who became a *Satī* out of grief for her mortally wounded husband, refers by way of contrast to the usual customs of Dāmara widows who would yield themselves up to common folk (VIII 2337-38).²³

It is no doubt in consonance with the traditional view of *Kāyasthas* (or petty officials), embodying the bitter experience of past generations, that Kalhaṇa again and again writes with biting satire of the wickedness

²³ On the other hand, Kalhaṇa with his usual impartiality mentions with high praise individual Dāmaras who were more or less exceptions to the general rule. Such were the Dāmaras of the family of Sūryavarmachandra which, as Kalhaṇa notes in a passage (VIII 2780) above quoted, was uniformly loyal to the Royal House of Malla. Janakachandra, the eldest son of Sūryavarmachandra, alienated by Harsha's policy of systematic persecution of the Dāmaras, joined in inviting Uchchala whom he was chiefly instrumental in raising to the throne after the resulting civil war. He was rewarded for his services with high honours. But he behaved with such arrogance as to bring about his own fall (VIII 15ff.). Gargachandra, the younger brother of Janakachandra, became a great favourite of Uchchala and helped him to repulse the dangerous invasion of his brother Sussala. After Uchchala's murder Gargachandra showed conspicuous courage and touching devotion by avenging his master's death on the heads of the conspirators (VIII 355). Refusing the offer of the throne for which he is praised (VIII 370) justly by the chronicler, Gargachandra raised to the throne Salhaṇa, a half-brother of Uchchala, thus becoming a real king-maker. Going over to the side of Sussala with whom he formed a matrimonial alliance, Gargachandra took part in

raising him to the throne. But Sussala's insistence upon the surrender of the young son of Uchchala drove Gargachandra into rebellion which ended in his imprisonment and death. After Sussala's murder Pañchachandra, Gargachandra's son, immediately joined Jayasimha whom he helped to secure the throne for himself (VIII 1393ff.). After Pañchachandra's death his younger brother Shashthachandra rendered loyal service to the king by sharing in the siege of Śiṛaśīlā castle and by defeating the pretender Bhoja's allies. In his account of Sussala's reign Kalhaṇa introduces us (VIII 1069 and *ibid* 1137) to two heroic ladies connected with Gargachandra's family, viz. Śīlā the mother of Vijaya (Garga's brother-in-law) and Chhuddā (Garga's wife), who led the royal troops and were killed fighting with the rebels. Well might the author condemn with unmeasured severity the actors in these grim tragedies, viz. the cruel enemy leader (VIII 1138) ("Thus cruelly did this wicked man commit another murder of a woman. What difference, however, is there between animals, *Mlechchhas*, robbers and devils?") and the cowardly royal troops (*Ibid* 1139: "Those of Lohara, who like cattle had fled and left their mistress, a woman, when she was being killed, O wonder, took up again the sword.")

of this class. Thus while describing (VIII 85 ff) with evident relish the suppression of *Kāyasthas* by Uchchala, Kalhaṇa makes the king remember a verse which has been traced with slight differences in *Manu-saṁhitā* VII 123: "Officials in truth are eager to kill, desirous of evil, robbers of others' property, rogues and demons; he should protect his subjects from them". The *Kāyasthas*, Kalhaṇa goes on, are 'plagues for the people'; worse even than the crab and the white ant; the ungrateful *Kāyastha* when in power destroys everything; like a *Vetāla* the *Kāyastha* slays his benefactor without a scruple.

Kalhaṇa's opinion of the class of merchants is expressed (VIII 128-34) with his usual biting satire in connection with the anecdote of Uchchala's judgment in the difficult law-suit between a depositor and a fraudulent merchant. "A merchant engaged in an embezzlement suit", says the chronicler, "is more to be feared than a tiger, as he shows a face smooth as oil, speaks little and puts on a gentle appearance. The courtesan, the *Kāyastha*, the clerk and the merchant, are all deceitful by nature and being trained by teachers are superior to a poisoned arrow. The merchant with his forehead, eyeholes, ears and heart painted with sandal-paste, his mouth narrow like a needle and his huge belly, destroys life in a moment drawing up blood as well as flesh."²⁴

Kalhaṇa excels above all in his life-like portraits of lowly characters like upstarts, knaves and impostors, which are drawn invariably with a master's hand. Very realistic is his description (VII 38 f) of 'the low-born mean *Kāyastha*' Bhadreśvara, who beginning life with his hereditary occupation of a gardener, rose to be an office-boy and was then elevated by the all-powerful minister Tuṅga to the charge of the Home administration. Kalhaṇa hits off the appalling wickedness of his character by saying that resembling an untimely death he 'cut off the sustenance of gods, cows, Brāhmaṇas, the poor, strangers and royal servants', and that worse than a *Kāpālīka* who lives on corpses he 'did not even allow his own people to live.' Very vivid and humorous is Kalhaṇa's description (VII 111) of Chandramukha, the illegitimate son of a clerk, who became the king's favourite and 'beginning with a cownie accumulated crores.' Even after reaching his great position he used to sell to his own servants the cakes brought to him as presents 'in accordance with the hereditary occupation of his family.' A vivid picture of an assorted set of knaves and impostors is drawn by the author in his account (VII 277 ff) of the evil associates of the youthful prince Kalaśa. They con-

²⁴ The discussion of Kalhaṇa's estimate of his countrymen by Stein (*op. cit.* Vol. I, *Introd.*, p. 16) ignores the Kashmirian author's refs. to the good qualities of their character. In this discussion of Kalhaṇa's account of the *Dāmaras* (*op. cit.*, Vol. I p. 19 and Vol. II Note G) Stein similarly misses the author's refs. to the loyalty of

individual members of this class to their kings. Again when Stein (*op. cit.* Vol. I, *Introd.* pp. 19-20) thinks that Kalhaṇa's opinion of *Kāyasthas* and merchants was derived from the author's personal experience, he ignores the traditional views of these classes as reflected e.g. in Kshemendra's *Narmamālā*.

sisted of firstly, a false incestuous teacher, secondly, a false 'cat-merchant' (so called from his peculiarity of keeping a black cat) who became a *guru* of dyers and other craftsmen and gave relief to honourable and learned men by putting his evil-smelling hand on their heads, thirdly, a strolling player who was a persistent corrupter of women and kept company with musicians resembling sewers, and fourthly, a silly Brāhmaṇa village astrologer, *guru* and procurer, who was surnamed *muṣṭīloṣṭhaka* for guessing things hidden in people's fists.²⁵

Attitude towards religious sects and the class of Brāhmaṇas

From the long and detailed account of the *Rājatarāgiṇī* we can form a clear idea of the religious conditions in the kingdom during the preceding centuries. We learn that Buddhism, Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Śakti worship were equally known to the people. From the fact that Kalhaṇa mentions not one single authentic instance of religious persecution during the whole course of the country's history, it can be inferred that the different faiths existed peacefully side by side. How close were the bonds drawn between Brahmanism and Buddhism in particular is proved by the fact to which Stein draws attention, viz. that again and again in Kalhaṇa's narrative royal as well as private donors are described as showing equal zeal in founding Brahmanical and Buddhist shrines and monasteries. Independent evidence of the high position of the founder of Buddhism in the Brahmanical religious system of Kashmir is furnished by Kshemendra's praise of Buddha as an incarnation of Viṣṇu in his *Daśāvatāracharita* (canto IX) as well as by the inclusion of Buddha's birthday in the list of festive days in the *Nilamata*, the canonical authority on the Brahmanical cult in Kashmir. Kalhaṇa's religious views fully partook of the prevailing tendencies. Himself a devout Śaiva, as the introductory verses prefixed to each Book of his chronicle testify, he was yet catholic enough to indicate in many passages his respect for Buddhism as well as his interest in Buddhist images and shrines. His healthy attitude towards religion is well illustrated by the contempt he repeatedly expresses towards false *gurus*, as for example in the satirical picture of the evil associates of the youthful Kalaśa quoted above. From his negative account of the beneficent rule of Yaśaskara we learn that he viewed with dislike married ascetics, Brāhmaṇa *gurus* drinking spirits and offering fish and cakes

²⁵ *Contra* Stein's view (Vol. I *Introd.* p. 19) that Kalhaṇa's outspoken contempt for upstarts was due to aristocratic hauteur, we may point to instances (VII 208.f; 296; 322) where the author gives a high character to the son of a litter-carrier whom Queen

Diddā raised to the position of a City-Prefect, and where he mentions with high praise the son of a humble temple watchman of the Vaiśya caste, as well as his nephew for their loyal services to King Ananta as well as for their pious acts.

in (Tantric) sacrifices while concocting *Paddhatis* in their support, and lastly, women assuming the role of (Tāntrik) *gurus*.²⁶

It is characteristic of the privileged position occupied by Brāhmaṇas in Kashmir (as in Ancient India generally) that Brāhmaṇa assemblies from *Agrahāras* as well as temple-priests are found frequently in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* to have influenced the internal administration by means of their solemn fasts. The instances recorded by the chronicler prove that this bloodless, but frequently effective, form of passive resistance was resorted to not only as a protest against financial exactions, but also for getting rid of an all-powerful but unpopular minister (VII 13 ff.), for effecting reconciliation between a king and his father (VII 400), for drawing the king's attention to the indifference of the ministers during a siege of the capital by a pretender (VIII 768), for forcing a pretender to make room for the legitimate king (VIII 901-3) and so forth. On one memorable occasion a Brāhmaṇa assembly was summoned by a commander-in-chief just after his triumph over a child-king, for the purpose of electing a successor to the throne (V 457 ff.). The assembly justified itself by setting aside the claims of the foolish commander-in-chief, and electing a poor but wise Brāhmaṇa, Yaśaskara, who became the founder of a new dynasty. It is curious to find that Kalhaṇa, notwithstanding his Brāhmaṇa descent, shows no sympathy for the solemn fasts of the Brāhmaṇa assemblies and the temple-priests, even when their object, according to his own showing, was laudable enough. Repeatedly (VI 339 etc.) he shows how the Brāhmaṇas allowed themselves to be won over by bribery. Mention is also made of their use of fasts for blackmail, e.g. at the critical time when king Sussala was besieged by the rebels at the capital and was being deserted by his troops (VIII 811). Elsewhere (VII 12 ff.) Kalhaṇa exposes the malignity of 'the wicked-minded Brāhmaṇas' who even after appeasement by the king sought to disgrace his minister by a trick, but were driven in flight to their own houses, according to the chronicler's story, by an evil spirit (*Kriyā*) that they had raised. In one place, however, (VIII 2224 ff.) we have an anecdote of a young Brahmana as illustrating the irrepressible power of 'the gods of the earth' even in this Kali age. When a wicked minister of King Jayasimha had made himself obnoxious by increasing the imposts and when the Brāhmaṇas of Avantipura had protested in vain by their usual methods of solemn fasts and self-immolations, the Brāhmaṇa Vijayarāja suddenly attacked and all but killed the unpopular minister inside the palace. Boldly avowing the crime, he was killed fighting desperately with the royal troops. On his arm was found written upon a leaf the famous verse (III 8) of the *Bhagavadgītā* "From *yuga* to *yuga* I come into existence to protect the righteous, to destroy the

²⁶ Vide Stein, *op. cit.* Vol. I *Introd.* p. 9, for refs. to foundation of Brahmanical and Buddhist shrines by kings and others as well as to celebration of

Buddha's birthday in *Nilamata*. On Kalhaṇa's view of married ascetics and so forth, vide VI 10-12 and especially VI 11-12n.

evil-doers and to restore the sacred law." The desire which he expressed in his death by this verse, comments the chronicler, sanctified him.

Kalhana's style

An ardent devotee of artificial poetry by training and by choice, Kalhana occasionally indulges in the intricacies of style dear to the heart of a *kavi*. But his usual style is that of a simple narrator of facts with highly realistic touches. Of vivid descriptions of scenes and events we have brilliant examples in Chakravarman's entrance into the capital after his great victory over the Tantrins (V 341-47), the majesty of Harsha's appearance as well as the splendour of the ladies of his palace and of his royal court (VII 876-78; 928-31; 946-49), Sussala's victorious return to the capital city Śrinagar (VIII 947-53), the sight of the murdered Sussala's corpse (VIII 134-39) and Bhikshāchara's last sally against his treacherous assailants (VIII 1744-50). Dramatic power of a high order is exhibited (IV 640 ff.) by the chronicler in the dialogue between a number of aggrieved Brāhmaṇas and their oppressive king Jayāpīḍa. When the Brāhmaṇas' spirited protest against their humiliation was stifled by the angry and mocking comment of the king, 'the twice-born Itṭila, a treasure of Brahmanical dignity', mustered up courage to give him a fitting reply. The king, roused to fury by Itṭila's threatening him with the staff of Brahman (*Brhmadanḍa*), burst out with the impious words, "May that staff of Brahman fall! Why does it tarry even for a single day?" And, sure enough, along with the Brāhmaṇa's angry retort, a pole from the canopy fell upon the king's limb and caused him a lingering death.

Containing all the elements of a drama is Kalhana's vivid and detailed account (VIII 297 ff.) of the assassination of king Uchchala. The king's fatal refusal to heed the last friendly warning, his unsuspecting walk into the fatal trap of the conspirators, the feint of a kneeling suppliant followed by the first treacherous dagger-thrust, the king's reproachful words to the one honest man in the company, and lastly, his heroic though unavailing resistance are portrayed before us with life-like vividness. No wonder that the chronicler in his usual moralising vein reads in this awful tragedy the lesson of the inevitable downfall of earthly greatness. A great point is added to the tragic picture by his pathetic account of the king's lonely funeral. "Nobody looked on when he was slain or when he was burnt. Quickly he disappeared from sight as if he had flown away" (VIII 340).²⁷

Instinct with high pathos and dramatic effect as well as the sense of inexorable destiny is Kalhana's vivid account (VIII 1276 ff.) of the tragic death of king Sussala. With a persistent delusion which Kalhana finds explicable in a man of his extraordinary vigilance only on the

²⁷ The reader will notice some striking points of resemblances between Kalhana's account of the murder of Uch-

chala and the description of the murder of Julius Caesar in Shakespeare's well-known drama.

assumption of a perverse destiny (VIII 1276-78), the king gave his fullest confidence to a low-born wretch who was all the while plotting for his assassination (VIII 1284). A loyal servant hearing of the conspiracy revealed it to the king who, however, with characteristic fatality expressed his complete disbelief in its existence in the presence of the assembled traitors (VIII 1290). On the fateful day the king summoned the arch-conspirators to meet him alone in the palace, and when a few faithful attendants still lingered in his room, he drove them away with words which proved only too prophetic, "Let him stop here who is a traitor" (VIII 1303). With the words "Fie, what treason" crossing his lips, the conspirators killed him before he could offer any resistance. As if nothing was wanting to complete the tragedy, the body of the murdered king, basely deserted by the cowardly royal troops, was mutilated and carried away by the conspirators who 'made it a spectacle for the villagers like the body of a slain thief.' At length a common soldier, though on the enemy's side, burnt the trunk out of a lingering sense of loyalty, while the head was cremated by the rulers of Rājapurī partly out of fear and partly out of gratitude felt by the brother of 'the wretched Khaśa prince' (VIII 1457 ff.).

Kalhaṇa best exhibits his mastery of the technique of *kāvya* literature by his frequent expression of poetical sentiments (*rasas*), which constitute according to the rhetorician Udbhaṭa (*Kāvya-lamkāra-saṃgraha* VI 17) 'the soul of poetry'. In one of his introductory verses (I 23-24) the author strikes his key-note by saying that his work is rendered pleasant by undercurrents of powerful sentiments, while its predominant sentiment is that of resignation (*śānta*), this last being justified by "the sudden appearance of living beings that lasts only for a moment." In accordance with this last characteristic Kalhaṇa's chronicle betrays a strong didactic tendency quite unlike the great majority of extant Sanskrit *kāvyas*. In describing the tragic ends of kings especially in his last two books, he usually impresses upon his readers the lessons of transitoriness of human greatness and of inevitable retribution for offences against the moral law. Further, in the true spirit of *Dharmaśāstra* and *Nitiśāstra* he frequently makes acts of statecraft and individual conduct the subject of general reflections. His composition is often interspersed with maxims of proverbial wisdom written in such elaborate metres and eloquent language and with such refinement of imagination that they have found their way into famous anthologies like Vallabhadeva's *Subhāshitāvalī*. We may, lastly, notice with Stein the significant fact that Kalhaṇa deals at exceptional length with those reigns which ended in pious renunciation, or else had a tragic close.

Kalhaṇa's mastery of pathos is well-illustrated by his short comment (VII 66-69) on the utter extinction of the illustrious Śāhi dynasty of Udbhaṇḍapura following from the victories of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna. Ascribing the event to fate which 'effects with ease what even in dreams appears incredible, what fancy fails to reach', Kalhaṇa

observes that the royal glory of the Śāhis has rapidly vanished down even to their very name so that one now asks himself whether with its kings, ministers and court the great Śāhi kingdom ever existed. Equally touching is his account (VII 445 ff.) of the death of King Ananta and Queen Sūryamatī. When Ananta was driven to commit suicide by the base ingratitude of his unworthy son and the reproaches of his queen, it could be said of him that he had at last found rest and peace with all. "He bore after death no grudge against anyone, nor did anyone bear a grudge against him. Death made this king of proud spirit happy and serene" (VII 454). The Queen, having made all her followers take a solemn oath for the safety of her grandson to whom she bade a tender farewell, followed her husband on a separate litter. "When the people saw these two going forth, the horizon was rent, as it were, by their tumultuous lamentations which mixed with the vibrating sounds of the funeral music" (VII 464). An infinite touch of pathos is lent by the author to his simple picture of her last moments. When she leapt with a bright smile from the litter into the flaming fire, 'the sky became reddened with sheets of flames, just as if the gods, in order to celebrate her arrival, had covered it with minium' (VII 479). Three male attendants and as many female servants showed their supreme devotion by following their unfortunate mistress to death.

Kalhana reaches his height of pathos in his circumstantial narrative (VII 1386 ff.) of the last days of king Harsha, which, we have good reason to believe, is based on first-hand sources. The 'long and astonishing' story of the king, as Kalhana himself says in this connection, is comparable to that of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. As the king found himself surrounded by his enemies, his resolution, wisdom and judgment deserted him. He rejected the wise advice of his ministers to retire to the family stronghold of Lohara and in default to seek his own death for avoiding disgrace at the hands of his enemies. While his fortunes were sinking to their lowest ebb, he committed the dastardly crime of killing Malla, father of the brothers Uchchala and Sussala, who was living the life of an ascetic at the capital. Malla's devoted wife followed her husband on the burning pyre, uttering a terrible curse against the doomed king (VII 1494). At the beginning of the fight with Sussala a brave officer having 'proudly in battle washed off his insult with the streams of blood flowing from the sword-blades', the king was greatly moved at his failure to recognise the true character of that grateful man (VII 1535). When Uchchala's forces poured into the capital, Harsha's dearly beloved son Bhoja left with a few followers amid the king's tears, while the Śāhi Princesses and other Queens burnt themselves in the palace which was plundered by the enemy's troops and the citizens. Deserted by his troops and ministers, the king fled from the capital 'with his property consisting of a single garment, with his bare life and with the single Prayāga as his follower' (VII 1622). Drenched with rain, he took refuge in the miserable hut of a wretched

mendicant where he stood on the muddy bare ground and passed a terrible night (VII 1645). As he thought of each of his misfortunes (VII 1648: "My kingdom is lost, my wives are burned, my son has disappeared, I am alone without friends and provisions, rolling about in the courtyard of a beggar"), he could not find even in stories his peer in misfortune. The cup of his misery was filled when he heard the news of Prince Bhoja's murder. When under pangs of hunger he made up his mind to take food, he found his hut surrounded by the enemy's soldiers to whom he had been betrayed. With his faithful follower he was killed after a brave resistance, with the Lord Śiva's name on his lips. The awful tragedy of the king's end is summed up by the chronicler in words of inexpressible pathos. "Sovereign as he was, he found a death which was fit for a thief", and again, "No other king has been seen in this epoch as powerful as he was, nor of any other king so shameful a funeral." But the tragedy was not yet over. Amid dreadful portents duly noted by the pious chronicler (VII 1722: "The earth together with the oceans shook, and the sky, though cloudless, sent down heavy rain"), the king's head was cut off by impious people who took it just as if it were that of a robber to his opponent. The body of so great a sovereign, laments the chronicler, could not be burnt without Uchchala's orders as if it had been that of a robber. Eventually it was burned 'naked like a pauper' by a certain wood-dealer. "Amid the numerous ladies of his court", concludes the chronicler, "not one bewailed him, amid so many of his followers not one followed him into death or settled at a sacred place as an ascetic".

Master of a keen sense of pathos, Kalhaṇa yet possessed the gift of humour in a remarkable degree. We have already referred to his humorous portraits of individual upstarts, knaves and impostors. Mention has also been made of his numerous hits at Brāhmaṇa assemblies and temple *purohitas* indulging in the farce of solemn fasts which were ended by bribery. The author draws a remarkably humorous picture (V 462-463) of the deliberations of the Brāhmaṇa assembly that elected Yaśaskara to the throne after the extinction of the Utpala dynasty. The wisecracks, 'dressed in coarse woollen cloaks' and 'resembling bulls without horns', with beards scorched by smoke, long disputed with each other for the proper choice of a king. "While they failed to reach a decision, nobody received the water of inauguration, only their own beards were wetted by the spittings ejected in their rough talk." At last, forced by the solemn fast of a whole host of *purohitas* of sacred places who assembled at the capital, they made their choice in favour of Yaśaskara. Elsewhere (VII 1574-6) while describing the horrors of Harsha's defeat by Uchchala's forces at the capital city, Kalhaṇa relieves the appalling gloom of the picture by a few humorous strokes. Among the boorish plunderers of the royal palace, one put camphor into his mouth mistaking it for sugar, others 'eager to get gold burned clothes painted with gold and then anxiously searched the ashes', others again ground in hand-mills

a mass of pearls which they took to be rice-corns. In other passages Kalhana's humour changes into bitter satire. Such is the case with his frequent references to the cowardly flight and desertion of the Kashmirian soldiery on the battle-field as well as his picture of disreputable social types and merchants mentioned above. We have seen above with what biting satire the author speaks again and again of traitors and cowards. Equally scathing is the author's exposure (VI 100) of the hypocrisy of Yaśaskara's courtiers who solemnly affirmed their decision to go into mourning after the king's death, but forgot their promise when his death was imminent. As regards the vulgar people, we have already seen how satirically Kalhana speaks of their fickleness which makes him indulge in the sage comment (VIII 896): "The vulgar people, just like animals, do not require any reasons for their actions." Very sarcastic also is the chronicler's account (VIII 702 ff.) of the absurd rumours which were circulated about the greatness of the pretender Bhikshāchara at the time of his successful invasion of Kashmir. Even hoary old men with long white beards, says the author, told stories like the following:—"He says nothing that is not refined; ten rocks he splits with an arrow, he walks a hundred *yojanas* and back without getting tired. Everyone, even if unconnected with public affairs, told and asked news about the pretender as if he were himself to get one-half of the kingdom". In this connection Kalhana gives (VIII 706-10) a list of the characteristic types of sedition-mongers who 'in this land delight in the king's misfortunes'. These are the old officials out of employment, the so-called princes living in the royal palace, some soldiers 'wicked and eager to get on high horses', the school-masters addicted to vicious practices, the aged dancing-girls in the temples, the roguish and sanctimonious merchants, the *purohita* corporations 'expert in arranging solemn fasts', and the boorish *Dāmaras* from the environs of the city.

KALHANA'S QUALIFICATIONS AS A HISTORIAN

(a) *Exact topography and precise chronology*

We have now examined the qualities of Kalhana's style which entitle him to high rank as a narrator of historical facts. Passing to the distinctive characteristics of his genius, we have first to mention the wealth and accuracy of his topographical details. The mass of his topographical references which makes his work, as Stein (II p. 366) well says, 'not only the amplest but also the most authentic of our sources for the geography of Kashmir,' has been conveniently arranged by the same scholar under three heads. We have first his valuable notices of the *Topographia Sacra* of which Kashmir has been so prolific from the earliest times. The Kashmirian *tīrthas* consisting principally of sacred springs with their tutelary Nāga divinities, sacred streams and lakes as well as sacred natural formations, are described by the chronicler

with such topographical fulness as to suggest reminiscences of his personal visits probably on pilgrimages. The legends which the author narrates about many of the *tīrthas* in his first three Books have been of substantial help in identifying their sites. Next to Kalhaṇa's notices of *tīrthas* may be mentioned his numerous references to the foundations of 'towns, villages, estates, shrines and buildings' by kings, queens, ministers and other officials as well as private individuals. There is ample evidence to suggest that these references are based on historical facts, or at least on genuine local tradition. Kalhaṇa's accurate descriptions of the ancient sites (with their buildings) have been especially helpful in their identification in recent times. Thus the data supplied by the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* have enabled Stein to trace the exact position and limits of Pravarapura, the capital of Pravaraśena II, and to fix the site and identify the remains of Parihāsapura, the capital of Lalitāditya. The third and the most important class of Kalhaṇa's topographical notices is concerned with his numerous references to marches, battles and sieges, while narrating the troubled history of the kingdom during the century immediately preceding his time. The descriptions of these military operations are given with such remarkable attention to topographical detail as to furnish the most decisive clues to their identifications. Topographical indications of great importance are also given in other passages which do not relate to military transactions. Thus in connection with the great engineering operations of Sujji in Avantivarman's reign the author indicates the position of the old and new confluences of the Vitastā and the Sindhu with such accuracy as to make possible Stein's identification of the former with absolute certainty.

Next to Kalhaṇa's attitude towards the geography of his native land may be mentioned his regard for chronology. Leaving aside the ancient or semi-legendary times for which Kalhaṇa's chronological aberrations have been sufficiently noticed above, we may state to his credit that from the beginning of the Utpala dynasty (Book V) onwards, he gives accurate dates in years, months and dates for the beginning (or end) as well as the important events of each reign. The reckoning is invariably made according to the current *Laukika* era which, as Bühler was the first to prove, commenced on the first day of the bright fortnight of Chaitra in the year 25 expired of the Kali era corresponding to the year 3075-76 B.C. In one passage Kalhaṇa distinguishes quite correctly, as has been proved by Stein (VIII 35.), a certain year (*Laukika* 4177 = 1101-2 A.D.) as containing two *Bhādrapada* months, viz. the proper and the intercalated months of that name.

Again, in dealing with what may be called recent history Kalhaṇa gives us precise dates of events calculated according to the month, and sometimes even the day of the month, in the *Laukika* era above mentioned. This may be illustrated in tabular form by a few examples.

Laukika era 4196=1121-22 A.D.

Name of month or day of the month.	Name of the incident.	Reference
1. Chaitra, the first month of the year	Great Rising of the <i>Ḍāmaras</i>	VIII 661
2. Vaiśākha	Sussala's march against Malakoshṭha	VIII 667
3. Jyāishṭha	Defeat and death of the rebel general Vijaya	VIII 714
4. Āshāḍha	Defeat of the King's forces by Prithvīhara	VIII 714
5. 3rd Āshāḍha, Sudi (or bright fortnight)	Sussala's family sent to Lohara	VIII 717
6. Śrāvaṇa	The pretender Bhikshāchara at Maḍavarājya	VIII 723
7. 14th Āśvina, Sudi	Sussala's misery because of the uproar in the whole kingdom.	VIII 786
8. 6th Mārgaśīrsha, Badi (meaning dark fortnight).	Sussala's departure from the capital.	VIII 819

Laukika era 4198=1122-23 A.D.

1. Chaitra	Ḍāmaras attack the city	VIII 1053
2. Vaiśākha	Sussala suddenly attacks and defeats the Ḍāmara	
	Prithvīhara	VIII 1057
3. 6th Jyāishṭha, Badi	Sussala's disaster on the Gambhīrā bridge	VIII 1064
4. 8th Āshāḍha, Badi	Sussala's victory at Gopādri hill	VIII 1111
5. Pausa	Tikka's march against Chhuddā, wife of Garga.	VIII 1136
6. Māgha	Sussala's return to the city after desertion of his general Yaśorāja.	VIII 1147

Laukika era 4203=1128-29 A.D.

1. New-Moon day (apparently of first month) at mid-day.	Sussala's murder	VIII 1348
2. Same day at night	Jayasimha's consultation with his ministers.	VIII 1369 ff.

- | | | |
|---------------------|--|--------------|
| 3. Next morning | Jayasimha's search for troops amid heavy snowfall. | VIII 1375-76 |
| 4. Same morning | Sujji commences his march for the capital. | VIII 1407 |
| 5. At mid-day | Bhikshāchara stops in the vicinity of the city. | VIII 1383 |
| 6. Close of the day | Sujji reaches the capital after his dangerous march. | VIII 1402 |

For the preceding period it is true, Kalhaṇa fails to give us the dates of all the principal events, but we may safely presume that they are at least narrated in their proper chronological sequence.

Along with Kalhaṇa's exact topography and regard for chronology, we may mention the completeness of his genealogical statements. In introducing new actors on the historical stage, the chronicler usually gives us welcome details of their ancestry. To take a few examples, he mentions the ancestors of Yaśaskara for four generations (V 469) and those of the general Jindurāja for five generations (VII 263-65), while the descent of Uchchala is traced from his fabled ancestor Nara, a king of Dārvābhisāra and a descendant of Bharadvāja through the historical Śimharāja, Kāntirāja, Jassarāja and Malla (VII 1282-87)²⁸.

(b) *Appreciation of loyalty and patriotism*

It is probably due as much to Kalhaṇa's innate nobility of character as to his bitter experience of the atrocious series of treacheries that stained the history of Kashmir within living memory that the chronicler uniformly bestows his highest praise upon servants bravely sacrificing their lives for their master's cause. How well he can appreciate such heroic sacrifice even on the part of foreigners desecrating one of his country's revered shrines to avenge the wrong done to their murdered lord and king, is proved by his comment (IV 322-335) on the episode of the Gauḍas (the people of Bengal) in the time of Lalitāditya. When the Gauḍa king was treacherously killed by Lalitāditya, his servants visiting Kashmir under the pretext of pilgrimage boldly attacked the temple of the God who had been made a surety for their master's safety. They destroyed a famous silver image of Viṣṇu, while being massacred to a man by the Kashmirian soldiery. Praising the Gauḍa heroes, with whose fame the whole world was filled down to his own days, the author pays his tribute to those good old times so unlike his own. "At that time kings everywhere possessed such jewels of servants who had the power of superhuman devotion to their lord". Coming to the history

²⁸ On Kalhaṇa's topographical notices vide Stein, *op. cit.* Vol. II, pp. 366-71 (*Memoir on the Ancient Geography*

of Kashmir). The initial date of the *Laukika* era was first explained by Bühler in his *Kashmir Report*, p. 59f.

of his own land Kalhaṇa refers (V 131 ff.) in terms of the highest praise to the followers of a Prince who unsuccessfully contended with king Śaṅkaravarman for the throne at the beginning of the latter's reign. Disdaining the enemy's offer of wealth and honours and thinking only of their own high honour, these valiant men were killed fighting in the cause of their master. With his usual sense of contrast between past glory and present degradation the author writes, "Servants were then still free from delusion, and not having yet learned to imitate the conduct of dogs, proudly disdained to fight for morsels." It is doubtless in consequence of the conspicuous rarity of such instances in later times—to which his sad comments bear witness—that Kalhaṇa takes particular care to record in his last two Books the names and deeds of those who proved their loyal devotion to the king amid the general baseness and treachery. Examples of such heroes extolled by the chronicler are the general Chandrarāja and the Governor Ānanda above mentioned who were killed fighting for their lord and king Harsha during his last wars with the brothers Uchchala and Sussala. On the other hand the chronicler visits with severe scorn (VIII 1410 ff.) Harsha's faint-hearted ministers 'those beasts of men,' who failed to exert themselves for the king during the catastrophic close of his reign. Kalhaṇa takes this opportunity to express his view of the duty of servants towards their masters. The servants, he says, deserve shame, who display weakness 'when success can be achieved by the mere sacrifice of that body which is bound to decay'. No one is meaner than he who, 'though a man, forgets that attachment to the master, the recollection of which makes women enter the pyre.' Those who look upon the master's afflictions with indifference 'make this earth unholy, though it is hallowed by sacred places.' If a man has seen his lord overcome by the enemy, his son dying of hunger and so forth, 'then hell has for him no greater torment in store.'

In another place Kalhaṇa, while describing the tragedy of Uchchala's murder, is careful to record (VIII 323-26) the name of a brave *Rāiaputra*, a humble lamp-bearer and a faithful *Kāyastha*, who vainly sacrificed their lives in attempting to defend their master. On the other hand he speaks with the utmost contempt of a high-born official who 'ran away like a dog hiding his dagger just as if it were his tail'. Speaking of a commander-in-chief who was driven to treason by king Sussala's ingratitude, Kalhaṇa says (VIII 690 ff.) that he would have remained unblamable if he had merely turned indifferent, but he made his name unfit for mention because of his treacherous designs. In this connection Kalhaṇa gives us his own view of the heinousness of treason, as he characterises traitors as 'the greatest sinners' and again as 'worse sinners than parricides.' In a later passage (VIII 1325-27) describing the tragedy of king Sussala's murder, Kalhaṇa conspicuously mentions one *Rāiaputra* chieftain (who was killed fighting for his lord) as washing off the shame with his blood, while disgrace stained the whole *Rāiaputra* tribe. In

the same context he singles out for honourable mention two brave Brāhmaṇas and a loyal chieftain who alone fell bravely fighting in trying to avenge their master.

With Kalhaṇa's characteristic horror of treason it is no wonder that he should carefully record the evil precedents created by the murder of kings. Referring to the slaying of the usurper who had been defeated and taken prisoner by Chakravarman, Kalhaṇa says (V 350), "From that time onwards servants in disregard of the sacred law began treacherously to murder kings who ought to be esteemed like fathers." Again while referring to the mutilation of king Harsha's body by the conspirators, he observes (VII 1721-24) that 'the new fashion of cutting off the king's head' perpetrated by impious people foreboded lasting calamities as from a curse for the country.

The sentiment of personal loyalty is so strong in Kalhaṇa that he praises it even in those who sacrificed their lives in the vain attempt to avenge their master's wrong on the king. To take a few instances, Kalhaṇa in describing the tragedy of Tuṅga's murder, singles out for praise an attendant of the minister who, though unarmed, attempted to protect him with his body (VII 82). He also takes care to record the names of those of Tuṅga's followers who 'brilliantly displayed the character of true servants' by trying to avenge his death (VII 90 ff.) On the other hand he refers with the utmost scorn (VII 87 ff.) to other followers of the unfortunate minister, who 'sat still in their fright like women', or else, dropping their swords, lost both honour and life. In connection with the treacherous murder of Sujji by order of Jayasimha Kalhaṇa mentions (VIII 2154) the heroic self-sacrifice of one of the murdered general's relatives as conferring merit upon his composition, and he goes on to record (*Ibid* 2176) 'the noble deeds' of others of his followers. In the same spirit Kalhaṇa praises (VIII 2319 ff.) a Brāhmaṇa and a Dāmara follower of Koshṭheśvara and his brother, who finding their masters struck down by Jayasimha's order, were killed fighting bravely to avenge his death. Of the brave Brāhmaṇa who 'fell down quickly upon the hero's couch, a stream of blood serving for its upper covering', Kalhaṇa admiringly says, "He deserved to be counted among the heroes for having displayed a laudable prowess under the eyes of his masters who had fallen into misfortune and were yet alive, and for having found a death worthy of envy."

That Kalhaṇa was capable of appreciating the more refined sentiment of patriotic sacrifice for the country's cause is proved by a number of examples. Describing the great defeat of the allied Kashmirian and Śāhi forces at the hands of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, Kalhaṇa, as we have seen, records (VII 59) the names of three Kashmirian warriors who, fighting valiantly on the terrible battle-field, 'preserved the honour of their country from being lost.' Again, while referring to the siege of Śrinagar by the rebellious Dāmaras in the reign of Sussala, he makes the king conclude his spirited address to a brave companion with the noble

words already quoted (VIII 1192): "Is there any person holding a place among self-respecting men who would abandon his country at the end without having wetted it with the blood of his body, just as the tiger does not leave his skin without having wetted it with his blood?"

True to his high appreciation of loyal devotion to the master, Kalhaṇa repeatedly mentions with admiration, notwithstanding his dubious view of women's character, the noble ladies and women of lesser rank who heroically sacrificed themselves in the same cause. Already for the ancient period we have the story (II 56-57) of Vākpuṣhṭā, the saintly Queen of Tuṅjīna I, who is said to have sacrificed her life as *sati* and the place of whose cremation was still called after her name down to the chronicler's own times. From this time onwards Kalhaṇa again and again singles out for honourable mention those Queens who honoured their husbands' memory by a voluntary death. Even the humble female attendants who performed this supreme act of devotion for their masters are mentioned with high praise. Very characteristic of him is his contrast between two dancing-girls, one of whom belonging to King Kalaśa's train 'disgraced the whole of women-kind' by yielding herself after the king's death to a village official (VII 726-28), while the other belonging to Utkarsha's household followed him on the funeral (pyre, thus displaying a noble conduct which 'makes women who are beloved by their husbands carry their heads higher even to this day.' (VII 850-59). Equally characteristic is Kalhaṇa's enthusiastic admiration of the noble wife of the Ḍāmara Koṣṭheśvara. Finding her husband lying wounded by the Kings' orders, she paid no heed to those who told her that she might yet get back her husband alive and committed suicide by entering the fire. "The fire itself", so runs the chronicler's tribute, "was purified from its sin by the feet of her who was proceeding to the world of virtuous women" (VIII 2336).

(c) *Appreciation of bravery*

It is in consonance with Kalhaṇa's lofty principles that he shows throughout his work high appreciation of heroic death on the battlefield in fighting even for one's own self. In the evil times of the usurpation of power by the Tantrins to which we have referred above, the sons of the minister Meruvardhana made themselves particularly obnoxious by their oppression of the subjects, and intrigues for seizing the royal power. After some time one of them, namely Śambhuvardhana, was able to secure the throne for himself by offering the highest bribe to the Tantrins. Nevertheless Kalhaṇa speaks in terms of high praise of the heroism displayed by this king and his followers in their unsuccessful fight with the rightful King Chakravarman (V 336: "The valiant Śaṅkaravardhana adorned the bed of heroes together with his dead followers of noble descent and good qualities"; *ibid* 337: "Who did not envy the Tantrins who found in close union their success and in close union their end?").

To take another instance, when describing the utter rout of the allied Kashmirian and Śāhi forces in the fight with Sultan Mahmud to which reference has been made above, Kalhaṇa praises the illustrious Trilochana-pāla, 'whom numberless enemies even could not defeat in battle,' whose 'superhuman prowess' was remembered even by the victorious Hammira (VII 60ff). Referring to Prince Bhoja, the dearly beloved son of King Harsha, who fell bravely fighting against his foes, Kalhaṇa observes that he was true to a Kshatriya's duties, that destroying his assailants like a lion he fell covered with blood and adorned the couch of a hero, and lastly, that he fell in combat in a manner worthy of great heroes' envy (VII 1655-56; 1676). The heroism displayed by King Uchchala before he was overpowered by his assassins somewhat atoned, says the chronicles (VIII 331), for the want of pity which he had shown towards the people during his life-time. Of the pretender Bhikshāchara who after an eventful career was betrayed by his followers and was killed fighting bravely to the last, Kalhaṇa says that he obtained in honour the highest place in a great host of kings, that he defied his ever adverse fate even at his end by his unbroken vigour, and lastly, that though he was a beggar as compared with former kings, they were as nothing compared with him for noble death (VIII 1768-77).

If Kalhaṇa is lavish in his praise of heroes, he is not less full of contempt for cowards. We have already noticed with what scorn he speaks of the cowardly Kashmirian as well as *Rājaputra* soldiery who basely abandoned Sussala's body to be mutilated and carried off by the murderous traitors. Other instances have been given of the chronicler's severe censure of the Kashmirian troops who fled from the battlefield in cowardly panic. In other passages Kalhaṇa visits with equal scorn the remissness of faint-hearted ministers and other high officials. When Sussala towards the close of Harsha's reign captured Vijayeśvara after defeating and killing the king's brave general, he found, says the chronicler (VII 1504ff.), the multitude of '*Rājaputras*, horsemen, Tantrins and feudatories' as well as the chiefs and officers assembled in the temple courtyard 'like frightened animals'. Mercifully promising safety to the cowardly gang who prostrated themselves at his feet, Sussala had their arms bound with ropes and made them over to the Dāmaras 'as one hands cattle to herdsmen'. The two leading officers, 'the weak Paṭṭa' and 'the treacherous Darśanapāla' forgot the little decency they had shown by desiring to go abroad. To take another instance, while describing the panicky flight of the royal troops in a night attack by rebels in Jayasimha's reign, Kalhaṇa disdains to mention names, and he contents himself with saying (VIII 188), 'There was not a single minister there who did not fling away courage and flee like a beast.'

(d) *Impartiality of judgment*

Not the least of Kalhaṇa's merits as a historian is the impartiality

of his judgment on the multitude of characters noticed in his work. This attitude in sharp contrast with the literary convention requiring unqualified eulogy of his hero on the part of the *kavi* does honour to the author's sterling honesty and independence of character. In truth Kalhaṇa is the only known Sanskrit poet who not only enjoyed no royal patronage, but also appears to have been actually in disfavour at the royal court at the time of composition of the work. One consequence of this independent position was Kalhaṇa's detached attitude towards recent and contemporary characters as well as those of the past. In one of the introductory verses of his work the author strikes a refreshing note when he says (1 7), 'That noble-minded poet alone is worthy of praise whose word like that of a judge keeps free from love or hatred in relating the facts of the past.' How faithfully Kalhaṇa follows this noble ideal throughout his work can be illustrated from a number of examples given above. We have seen how he faithfully, though reluctantly, records the pious foundations of evil kings and their ministers, while on the other hand he makes no secret of the weaknesses of admittedly able and good rulers. It is especially in his treatment of recent and contemporary characters that his impartial attitude is clearly manifested. Thus although Kalhaṇa could not but have been grateful to Harsha for the favour shown to his family, he apportions praise and blame with equal impartiality to the king's character. Uchchala, Harsha's successful rival, is praised as we have seen for his energy and resolution, his solicitude for his people's welfare and his piety, but his harshness of speech and other defects meet with just and severe censure. Sussala, while getting full credit for his good qualities, is strongly condemned for his cruel exactions and his senseless persecutions of Dāmaras and officials. In his account of the contemporary king Jayasīṃha Kalhaṇa finds it necessary to give him a certain amount of conventional praise which, however, does not ignore the mixture of good and bad qualities in his character. In his subsequent narrative, while giving specific instances of the king's resolution and cunning diplomacy as well as piety, Kalhaṇa quotes other instances pointing to his weakness for evil counsels, his want of judgment, his lack of comprehension and so forth. In the same context Kalhaṇa gives us with equal impartiality the lights and shades of the character of Bhikshāchara, the most dangerous adversary of the reigning king as well as of his father and uncle. The pretender's failure as king, Kalhaṇa shows us, was brilliantly redeemed by his subsequent exhibition of extraordinary ability and skill in fighting, and finally by his 'noble death' in his last fight with his enemies.²⁰

²⁰ A convincing proof of the impartiality and independence of Kalhaṇa's judgment is furnished by the contrast between his accurate characterisation and the poet Bilhaṇa's conventional praise (*Vikramāṅkadēvacharita* XVIII 33ff.) of a number of Kashmirian

kings, queens and princes (namely, Ananta, Subhata, Kshitipati, Kalasa, Utkarsha, Harsha and Vijayamalla). The arguments indicating Kalhaṇa to have been in disfavour at the royal court are given by Stein, *op. cit.* Vol. I, *Introd.* pp. 17ff.

Critical estimate of Kalhaṇa—Bāṇa and Kalhaṇa compared

In the long roll of our ancient chronicles two names stand out conspicuously above all the rest, namely, those of Bāṇa and Kalhaṇa. It seems, therefore, desirable to institute here a comparison between these two literary masters. From the point of view of subject-matter the chronicler of Harsha's reign was more fortunate than that of Kashmir. It is true that the first-named author dealt (and that imperfectly) with the biography of a single paramount ruler, while the second claimed to record the history of his land from its dim beginning in the remotest past down to the blaze of full publicity in his own times. Still the hero of the *Harshacharita* was the central figure in the history of his time in Northern India with his wars and alliances extending to its distant frontiers, while his administration on the whole presents a pleasing picture of enlightened rule. By contrast the story of the *Rājataranginī* is concerned with the fortunes of a small Himalayan kingdom, which protected by its mountain-walls was most often isolated from the great currents of history that swept over the rest of India, so that even the tremendous impact of militant Islam which brought the greater part of the country under the heels of the Sultanate of Delhi in the twelfth and following centuries left the Happy Valley in the enjoyment of its secure independence. The internal history of the kingdom during the later centuries by a similar contrast was far from presenting a flattering spectacle. The promise of internal consolidation and peaceful progress under the kings of the early historical period was cut short by the misrule of kings and the unending rebellions of pretenders and unruly royal vassals (*Dāmaras*) in later times. The dreary succession of court-intrigues, conspiracies and rebellions forms the bulk of Kalhaṇa's recent history. In so far as the form of their historical composition is concerned, both Bāṇa and Kalhaṇa designed their works on the model of *kāvyas*. But while in Bāṇa we find a strong sense of realism getting the better of the author's artificial inheritance, in Kalhaṇa the instinct of a true historian triumphs over the same. Thus while Bāṇa gives us wonderfully life-like pictures of contemporary historical figures and scenes but makes the faintest reference to his hero's internal administration and gives only general accounts of his wars and alliances, Kalhaṇa deals exhaustively with all aspects of his theme (political history and court-life, administration, pious foundations of kings, queens and so forth, foreign relations, natural calamities as well as literature and art). This contrast is based upon the fundamental difference in the mental make-up of the two writers, one drawing his material almost wholly upon personal observation, and the other basing his work upon a critical study of the older chronicles as well as the examination of inscriptions, coins and monuments. The distinction between Bāṇa and Kalhaṇa proceeding from their different outlook is reflected in other respects; for while Bāṇa betrays a tendency to exaggerate the lights and shades of his

historical characters according to his individual bias and the inclinations of his royal patron, Kalhaṇa gives us a balanced judgment on the complexities of those characters. Like Bāṇa, Kalhaṇa is a great master of vivid description. But while the former excels in the delineation of pathos, the latter according to his own admission delights in the exhibition of the sentiment of resignation, although he shows himself when necessary to be an equal master of pathos. Again, both the authors frequently have recourse to imaginary dialogues and soliloquies not only for varying the monotony of their descriptions, but also for displaying their penetrating analysis of human motives. It remains to mention that both the authors share (the former much more than the latter) in such failings as incapacity to distinguish history from legend and an unquestioned faith in the current beliefs and superstitions.

At the end of the above comparative estimate of the two leading ancient exponents of the art of historical composition in our land, we may make some further observations to clarify Kalhaṇa's characteristics as a historian. We have referred above to the chronicler's criticism of literary sources of his work at its very beginning. The same critical spirit is exhibited in Kalhaṇa's occasional rejection of discrepant reports and popular rumours about historical events. These relate for instance to the end of Mihirakula (I 309-17) and of Lalitāditya (IV 367-70, VII 1428-50), the betrayal of Harsha (VII 1691-95), and the flight of Bhikshāchara from Uchchala's palace (VIII 224-33). In two instances, namely, those concerned with the identity of Vikramāditya (II 6), and the cause of Yaśaskara's death (V 108-12) we find him quoting alternative views only to reject them. In the second place we have mentioned Kalhaṇa's use of soliloquies and orations to express graphically his analysis of human motives. This may be illustrated by a number of examples. Avantivarman at the beginning of his reign is made by the author to indulge in a self-reflection (V 5-15) on the vanity of earthly greatness, which leads him to distribute his valuables among Brāhmaṇas 'with his own hands as a porridge'. Prince Uchchala, rising in revolt against Harsha, delivers a bold speech (VII 1282ff.) at the court of Rājapuri vindicating before his treacherous host his claim to the throne. Harsha, dispirited by the success of the rebels, addresses his ministers in a long speech justifying his decision to court death. Speaking of his aims and their tragic failure, he says (VII 1416f.) that his motive in seeking self-destruction is not the fear of death, but that of disgrace attending his reputation at the hands of his unworthy rivals. In a few cases, again, the author, while fully sharing the Hindu belief in the omnipotence of fate, traces historical events to their proximate and rational causes. Thus Jayāpīḍa's sudden change from an ambitious conqueror into an oppressor is ascribed (IV 621) directly to the advice of *Kāyasthas*. The attainment of royal dignity by Yaśaskara 'who was not of royal descent and had wandered over the earth as a pauper' is said (V 479-80) to have been possible only through the mad Avanti's extermination of

his own family and ousting of the latter's child by the commander-in-chief Kamalavardhana.

We may mention in this context that Kalhana, notwithstanding his belief in fate and in *karma*, occasionally draws luminous generalisations from his study of historical facts. Thus in criticising the infructuous attempt of the commander-in-chief Kamalavardhana to obtain the throne by diplomacy after failing to snatch it by force when within his immediate reach, Kalhana teaches (V 459-60), as Stein observes, the necessity in politics of the quick realisation of the opportune moment and of boldness in seizing it. Again, in commenting on Jayasimha's preparations for his expedition against the Śīraṣhīlā castle, he observes (VIII 2522-23) that failure must result from over-estimating the enemy's resources and undue deliberation in coming into grips with him. Above all Kalhana gives in one place (IV 344ff.) what purports to be the political testament of one of the greatest rulers of Ancient Kashmir, Lalitāditya. In reality it sums up the author's own view of the quintessence of Kashmirian State policy based upon his bitter experience of the complete political disintegration of the kingdom in his recent times. Constant watchfulness, we are told, must be maintained against internal dissension, while external enemies may be ignored as the country is fortified against them by nature. The mountain-tribes should be punished even if they gave no offence, for if allowed to acquire wealth they would become formidable in the shelter of their mountain fastnesses. Villagers should not be left with more food-supply than what is required for one year's consumption, nor more oxen than what are wanted for the tillage of their fields, for otherwise they would become in a very short time very formidable *Dāmaras* (an unconscious historical anachronism on the author's part) capable of resisting the king's orders. The testament concludes with other valuable lessons of statecraft like the necessity of guarding the strong places, of selecting the troops from different districts, of preventing a too close union between official families and so forth.

We may quote in this connexion a few extracts illustrating Kalhana's sense of historic justice. He takes Śaṅkaravarman's reign (V 211) to be a good illustration of the dictum that "those kings who do evil to their subjects have their family, their glory, their life, their wives, nay even their name, destroyed in a moment". For not only did this king of wicked conduct lose a number of his children by the people's curse, but alone among kings he had the misfortune of disappearance of the name given to his own town. A still more remarkable instance is furnished by the author's striking reflections (VIII 1951-61) on the squandering of Sussala's treasures in the Lohara fort by the usurper Mallārjuna. Illustrating his dictum that the wealth which kings acquire by oppressing their subjects must fall a prey to rivals or enemies or fire, the author quotes the fate of the royal treasures of Jayāpīḍa, Śaṅkaravarman, Paṅgu (Nirjitavarman), Yaśaskara, Kshemagupta, Saṃgrāma-rāja, Ananta, Kalaśa and Harsha. By way of contrast the author ob-

serves that the lawfully acquired riches of Chandrāpīḍa, Uchchala, Avantivarman and other kings were never destroyed by improper uses.

If in the above instances Kalhaṇa approaches the level of a critical historian, in other respects he falls far short of this standard. We have mentioned above a few defects shared by him with Bāṇa, namely, failure to distinguish history from legend and belief in the operation of supernatural forces on human affairs. The former tendency is illustrated in his failure to recognise the great gulf which separates the ancient or semi-legendary from the recent or historical period of his native land. Thus his account of ancient kings and dynasties is embellished with local and other legends about the authenticity of which he has no doubt, while his record of the victorious exploits of Lalitāditya and other early kings extending to the furthest limits of India is based on evident good faith. Kalhaṇa evidently was not one of those sceptics of his time who, as he says (VII 1137-38), were swayed by doubts in regard to the miraculous deeds of Meghavāhana and other ancient kings, for he puts these miraculous deeds on the same level with the astonishing misdeeds of the historical king Harsha. Coming to the second defect mentioned above, we may state that Kalhaṇa repeatedly mentions as sober historical facts the slaying of kings and others by witchcraft and the influence of omens and portents on history.³⁰

The third characteristic of Kalhaṇa which may be mentioned in this context arises from his sharing in some fundamental beliefs of his countrymen. We have seen how the author is capable of drawing from the history of his native land sound lessons of statecraft. Nevertheless he most often takes striking historical facts to illustrate or justify the basic Hindu concepts of the influence of deeds of a former birth (*karma*) and of fate (*daiva*). To take a few instances of the former type, the commander-in-chief Kamalavardhana's failure to seize the throne when it was within his grasp is attributed to his bad policy or else to acts done in a previous existence (V 456ff.). The usurper Parvagupta's death in a *tīrtha* is ascribed to some former merits which had not lost their efficacy (VI 147). The plunder of Kashmir by some oppressive officials in the reign of Abhimanyu is the result of the sins which this land had accumulated (VI 288). The appointment of the low-born, mean *Kāyastha* Bhadreśvara as his assistant by Tuṅga takes place when the merits of his former existence were exhausted (VII 37). Kalaśa's sudden change from a voluptuary and oppressor into a vigilant guardian of his subjects' welfare is due to the rise in the subjects' fortune caused by their previous merits (VII 506). Harsha's escape from assassination at the hands of his aggrieved subjects is due to his having a balance of life-period still left to him, or else 'the sinfulness of his subjects' (VII 1140-41).

³⁰ For ref. to Kalhaṇa's belief in witchcraft as well as in omens and portents,

vide Stein, *op. cit.* Vol. I, *Introd.*, pp. 31-32.

Of the second type relating to the author's assurance of the omnipotence of fate in the ruling of historical events we have the following examples. It is by the will of fate that the minister Tunga is kept in office by the king against his wish (VII 7), and the attempts of rebels to drive him out turned to his own glory (VII 28). It is by the same inscrutable cause that he is led to leave for the palace to meet his doom at the hands of conspirators (VII 79). The rapid and complete overthrow of the noble House of Śāhis is due to fate which "effects with ease what even in dreams appears incredible, what fancy fails to reach" (VII 67). The will of fate makes king Utkarsha commit the fatal mistake of exchanging the ring which is to be the signal for prince Harsha's murder (VII 803). The sorry plight of a pretender who after being honoured by neighbouring chiefs found a mean employment in the royal camp in Uchchala's time gives the chronicler the occasion for his striking statement: 'Man's effort resembles a fire in the grass, which by the wind of fate is made to flame up in one place even when subdued and to go out in another even if kindled' (VII 220). The tame submission of the brave Damara Gargachandra to arrest and imprisonment by king Sussala is ascribed to the will of fate which 'makes a person in this world move about without free will, just like a puppet pulled by a row of strings' (VIII 607). To the same mysterious cause is attributed the defeat of Sussala 'the foremost of the all-powerful by the sole support of his arms' at the hands of rebels (VIII 669-71), as also the fatal delusion which led this most vigilant of kings to give his complete confidence to a double-faced traitor who ended by murdering him in his palace (VIII 1276-78). The omnipotence of fate is expressed in another striking passage (VIII 1401). 'Fate, whose most wonderful power cannot even be imagined in a moment, makes a man fall who stands firmly and raises another who is about to fall, just as the current of a river washes away one river-bank and raises another.'

We may pause here to discuss the causes of Kalhana's defects and shortcomings as a historian as stated above. These have been held by Stein to have been owing to a twofold factor, namely, the local and the general. Under the first head are comprised three elements. In the first place, we are told that the defective character of Kalhana's sources probably accounted for the legendary and anecdotal aspect of his narrative of the ancient history as well as its otherwise bare list of royal names. In these sources, as Stein well shows by the analogy of the later Persian summaries of Kashmir history based on the *Rājataranginī*, the truly historical facts must have been gradually eliminated, while the legends and anecdotes receive an increasing measure of attention. Secondly, the geographical isolation of Kashmir explains, as Stein well observes, the chronicler's exaggerated sense of importance of his native land so as to lead him to his description of the 'world-conquests' of Lalitāditya and other kings. Thirdly and lastly, the fact that the people of Kashmir down to modern times have been specially 'a gens religiosissima' prob-

ably accounts, as Stein thinks, for the large part which supernatural agencies play in Kalhaṇa's narrative of historical events. In contrast with the above Stein's view of the general causes of Kalhaṇa's shortcomings is open to criticism. He takes the chronicler's uncritical chronology for the ancient times to vindicate an oft-quoted verdict of the illustrious Muslim scholar Alberuni about the indifference of the Hindus to the order of historical facts. Similarly he explains Kalhaṇa's naïve faith in the legends of the *Mahābhārata* and the marvellous stories of the early Kashmirian kings in the light of the incapacity of the Indian mind to distinguish legend from history. Now in so far as the somewhat sweeping generalisation of the Muslim scholar is concerned, it is belied by the Purāṇic list of royal genealogies and of spiritual succession of teacher and pupil which profess to trace the traditional history from its beginning down to the early centuries of the Christian era with frequent chronological references and landmarks. Mention may also be made of the historical inscriptions which at least from the time of the Imperial Guptas carefully record the genealogical succession of kings with important references to their dates. In so far as Stein's application of Alberuni's dictum to the *Rājatarangiṇī* is concerned, this is disproved for its recent times by the author's accurate record of the succession of royal dynasties and individual reigns with dates recorded in the current *Laukika* era. As regards the alleged incapacity of the Indians to distinguish legend from history, it may be pointed out that this is by no means their monopoly. With the Indian beliefs in the legends of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* we can well match the unquestioned faith in the legends of the Trojan War which have been the characteristic of the Western students of classical antiquity till the rise of critical standards of historical scholarship in the nineteenth century. Nor are the Indian legends of the creation of the world more irrational than those of the Christian scriptures which have commanded wide support until the rise of modern science. When Stein further charges the Indians with failure to recognise the changes resulting from historical development, he seems to have overlooked the conscious abrogation of ancient customs and practices in the *Smṛitis* from its beginning in the *Dharmasūtras* down to its maturity in the late doctrine of practices forbidden in the Kali Age (*Kalivarjas*). In the particular instance of Kalhaṇa we have seen how he distinguishes, however unconsciously, between the legendary and the historical periods of Kashmir.³¹

Let us sum up in conclusion our estimate of Kalhaṇa's place among our ancient writers of chronicles. It speaks much for the author's merits as a historian that he has succeeded in imparting a high degree of interest to his unpromising theme. The chronicler's attempt to in-

³¹ On the royal and other genealogical lists in the *Purāṇas*, vide Chapter III above. Vide Stein, *op. cit.* Vol. I,

Introd. pp. 29-30, 32, for his view of Kalhaṇa's defects as a historian.

roduce order and precision into the loose chronology and traditional history of the earlier dynasties was, from want of authentic material, foredoomed to failure. On the other hand he gives us for the historical period a wonderful picture of his native land which gains continually in historical accuracy and completeness from the beginning of the Kārkoṭa dynasty (Book IV) onwards. Among authors of historical *kāvyas* Kalhaṇa beyond doubt occupies a position of pre-eminence by virtue of his attention to the *minutiae* of general administration and its influence for good or for evil upon the people's fortunes in a small Himalayan kingdom, his understanding of military operations, his exact topography and chronology, the individuality of his extensive series of historical characters, his impartial judgment and his approach towards the standards of historical criticism.



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PART II
GENERALITIES

PART II
GENERALITIES

CHAPTER VI

PERIODS OF INDIAN HISTORY

Without denying the essential unity of history, it is not only possible, but desirable to divide it into well-marked chronological periods. In the history of India three periods are often distinguished by the authors of text-books as well as advanced works. These are characterised as 'Hindu', 'Muhammadan' and 'British'. There is about this scheme of division an air of delusive simplicity which is sufficient to recommend it to popular acceptance. It seems to imply the three most important elements of the political life of India till recent times as successively ruling the destinies of the country in the past. And yet when it is subjected to a close scrutiny, it is found to be beset with special difficulties which preclude its acceptance for purpose of serious study.

To begin with the so-called 'Hindu period' of Indian History, it is usually taken to extend from the earliest times to the Muhammadan conquest. Unfortunately the term 'Hindu', owing to the course of historical events, has a somewhat ambiguous connotation. As is well known, this term was not known to the Ancient Indians, but was coined from the river-name Sindhu by the Ancient Iranians from whom it was afterwards adopted by the Greeks, who passed it on to the Arabs and the Persians. In this original sense of the word, it stands for the people or group of peoples occupying a certain definite area and possessing a distinctive type of culture. In popular parlance, however, and even in official nomenclature in modern times, 'Hindu' is held to be synonymous with a follower of the Brahmanical religion and Hindus are distinguished as such from Buddhists and Jainas, not to speak of the adherents of alien faiths reaching the country in later times. Now if we make use of the latter and popular sense of the term, it may properly be held to exclude those centuries during which Buddhism was the dominant religion. In fact we should confine its scope only to the subsequent centuries which were marked by the dominance of Brahmanical Hinduism. Such is the view of Mr. C. V. Vaidya who distinguishes three periods in the early history of India, viz., 'Aryan' (c. 4000 or 2000 B. C.—300 B. C.) 'Aryo-Buddhist' or 'Buddhist' (c. 300 B. C.—600 A. D.) and 'Hindu' (c. 600—1200 or 1300 A. D.). It is unnecessary to expose the fallacy of this view which seeks to project into the past the narrow and limited connotation associated with the word 'Hindu' in later times. But it may well be taken to illustrate how owing to the ambiguity inherent in the term in question, it is possible to restrict its application to a very limited period of the Ancient History of India.¹

¹ Derivation of the term *Hindu*:—Vedic Sanskrit *Sindhu* > Avestan *Hindu* >

Old Persian *Hi(n)du* > Greek *'Indoi*, and Arabic *Hind*. A historical parallel

The difficulty is minimised, but not extinguished, when we understand the term 'Hindu' in its wider original sense. It is a historical truism that the Hindu type of culture, like the Hellenic culture in classical antiquity, resulted from the fusion of the intrusive Aryan and the indigenous non-Aryan elements. In India, naturally enough, owing to the larger size of the country, this blending of the two distinct cultures was a much slower and more difficult process than it was in Ancient Greece. In so far as the North (the territories between the Himalayas and the Vindhya) is concerned, it must have practically commenced during the *Brāhmaṇa* period (c. 800—600 B.C.). Thus while the *Rigveda*, the oldest literary monument of the Indo-Aryans, takes us scarcely farther eastwards than the Jumna, the *Brāhmaṇas* include 'Vidarbha' (Berar?) in the South, and Magadha and Aṅga in the East within their ken. In the tract to the south of the Vindhya the diffusion of the Aryan culture came necessarily later. Thus the earliest references to the Pāṇḍya, Chola and Kerala kingdoms are given by the grammarian Kātyāyana (c. 400 B.C.), while his great predecessor Pāṇini's acquaintance extends only to the Aśmakas on the upper course of the Godāvari. Allowing a century for the mingling of the Aryan and non-Aryan cultural elements, we arrive at c. 500 B.C., as the approximate date of the rise of the complex Hindu culture in the North and 300 B.C. as the corresponding date for the South. It follows from the above that the 'Hindu period' of Indian history strictly so-called may be traced back at the earliest to c. 500 B.C. in the North and c. 300 B.C. in the South. This of course makes the expression wholly inappropriate for the designation not only of the Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Chalcolithic, but also of the Early Vedic Ages.

The above arguments find a striking corroboration in Vincent Smith's well-known text-book on the History of India. In this work the author divides the Early History of India into three sections, viz. 'Ancient India' (from the earliest times to c. 322 B.C.), (2) 'Hindu India' (c. 322 B.C.—647 A.D.), and (3) 'Mediaeval Hindu Kingdoms' or 'the Hindu period' (c. 647—1200 or 1300 A.D.). Here, it will be observed, there is a frank recognition of the insufficiency of the term 'Hindu period' to serve as a label for the Ancient history of India. But no attempt is made to substitute a more suitable title. Incidentally it may be remarked that no sufficient reasons exist for distinguishing the second and the third sub-periods under the titles 'Hindu India' and 'the Hindu period' respectively. If this difference is made to rest on the incorporation of the Rajput ruling houses within the Hindu pale, which is the leading fact of the last sub-period, it may be argued that this was not a new phenomenon, but was paralleled in the earlier period by the admission of Greeks, Scythians,

is found in the case of Ancient Greece where this geographical name 'was apparently derived by the Romans from the Illyrians who applied the name of an Epirot tribe (Graeci) to all their

southern neighbours' (*Encycl. Britt.* s.v. Greece). For the division of 'the early history of India' into three periods, vide C. V. Vaidya, *History of Mediaeval India*, Vol I, Preface, p. 1.

Parthians, Kushans and others into the orthodox society. Equally unfortunate is the choice of the date of accession of the Mauryas as the dividing line between 'Ancient' and 'Hindu' India. For whatever might be the significance of the dynastic revolution which substituted the Mauryas for the Nandas, no one will claim for it that it was attended for the first time with the diffusion of Hindu culture throughout the country. ²

Let us now turn to the second division of Indian History, the so-called 'Muhammadan period.' With few exceptions modern authors have applied the term to the interval of nearly five centuries between the conquest of Northern India by the Muslim Turks and the downfall of the Mughal empire. There are, however, strong and weighty reasons against the use of the term in the way suggested. The first difficulty arises from the wide and indefinite connotation of the term 'Muhammadan' which is indifferently applied to Arabs, Turks and Afghans on the one side, and converts from Hinduism on the other. The principal objection, however, is based on the fact that it conveys an altogether erroneous impression of the period to which it is applied. It ignores the fact that during the centuries in question there existed side by side with the Muslim States numbers of independent Hindu kingdoms in different parts of the country. Some of the Hindu dynasties attained such importance that they presented a formidable barrier against the advance of the Islamic power, and not unoften carried their arms into the enemy's country. Such were the powerful dynasties of the Eastern Gāngas of Kalinga and the Gajapatis of Orissa, who preserved the independence of the eastern coast far down into the middle of the sixteenth century. Such, again were the ruling houses of Rajasthan, and especially the Guhilots of Mewar whose exploits earned for them the title of *Hindu Suraj*, i.e. 'the sun of the Hindus'. Such, lastly, was the empire of Vijayanagar which maintained for nearly three hundred years the line of the Tungabhadra and the Krishna against the assaults of the Muhammadan powers of the Deccan. Indeed there were certain parts of the country, which, owing to the difficulties of their communications or their remoteness or some other cause, were never completely subdued by the arms of Islam. This was the case with Assam and Nepal in the North, with the forest regions of the modern Madhya Pradesh, the Chota Nagpur Plateau and the old Orissan Feudatory States in the middle, with Kerala in the extreme South. Of still greater significance is the fact that the Islamic power in India was not maintained through the centuries at a steady level, but periodically suffered serious set-backs. In truth, we may distinguish in

² It is interesting to observe that the title 'The Hindu period' is likewise applied by James Kennedy (*Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II, Chap. VIII) to the period from 650 to 1200 A.D. On the other hand the editors of the recently published volumes of *The History and Culture of the Indian People* bearing the titles "*The Vedic*

Age" (Vol. I), "*The Age of Imperial Unity*" (Vol II), "*The Classical Age*" (Vol III) "*The Age of Imperial Kanauj*" (Vol. IV) and *The Struggle for Empire* (Vol. V) have steered clear of the difficulties created by the application of the term 'Hindu,' although their own designations are not free from objections.

the history of this power two great periods of advance alternating with two other periods of decline. The first period opens with the advent of the vigorous Houses of Ghazni and Ghor who won for Islam the dominion over the richest and the most extensive parts of Northern India. It reaches its culmination in the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq whose empire at its greatest extent (c. 1338—39) embraced twenty-four provinces extending from the Punjab to Mysore and the Coromandel coast. For more than two hundred years after this time the history of Muslim rule in India is, on the whole, written in decay. The mighty Sultanate of Delhi is broken up into fragments, while the invasion of the fierce Timur sucks the life-blood out of its last remnants. Meanwhile the stage is cleared for the revival of the Rajput power in the North and the rise of the powerful empire of Vijayanagar in the South. The second wave of Muslim advance breaks upon Northern India with the accession of Akbar, the real founder of the Mughal dynasty, in 1556. The advance thenceforth is on the whole steadily maintained till the latter part of the reign of Aurangzib (o. 1700). 'Under him the Mughal empire reached its greatest extent and the largest single State ever known to India from the dawn of history to the rise of the British power was formed. From Ghazni to Chatgaon, from Kashmir to the Karnatak, the continent of India obeyed one sceptre, and beyond this region in far-off Ladakh and Malabar the suzerainty of the same ruler was proclaimed from the pulpit.'³ From the closing years of Aurangzib's reign onwards the Muhammadan power in India is at a low ebb. Gradually the empire of the Great Mogul is dissolved into fragments, of which only the dominions of the Nizams of Hyderabad attain any degree of importance. The devastating invasions of the Persian Nadir Shah and the Afghan Ahmad Shah Abdali not only drain the Mughal dominion of its last resources, but rob it of the province of the Punjab. The great province of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa succumbs to the rising British power, while the adjoining State of Oudh is reduced to the position of its dependant ally. The heir of Aurangzib, driven from his capital, becomes for a time the pensionary of the Company. Meanwhile the hardy and active Marathas, roused to a sense of their unity by the genius of Shivaji, break open their provincial barriers and spread their conquering hordes over the greater part of the country. Even the colossal disaster at Panipat fails to cripple them for any length of time, and they remain the most formidable indigenous power till they are outwitted by the diplomacy of Wellesley and thwarted by the arms of Wellington and Lake.

The foregoing argument will make it clear that neither of the terms 'Hindu' and 'Muhammadan' is fit to serve as the title of a great division of Indian History. The same objections do not apply to the term 'British period' for reasons which are sufficiently obvious.⁴ It therefore behoves

³ Sir Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. I, *Introd.* p. xi.

⁴ To be quite logical, we should speak of

'the Christian period of Indian history' matching its Hindu and Muhammadan periods. This has actually been done

us to consider whether we can profitably substitute more suitable terms for those which we have been examining so far. Here we may apply, as some have already done, the analogy of European History with its well-known divisions into Ancient, Mediaeval and Modern periods. Between Ancient and Medieval India the line of division has sometimes been drawn at the death of Harsha (c. 647 A. D.). No sufficient reason exists for adopting this view, for the changes which followed the death of the great Emperor—not excluding the rise of the Rajput dynasties and the regrouping of the States—were not different in kind from the events of the earlier times. Equally inconclusive is the view which makes the division between Ancient and Mediaeval India coincide with the rise of the Guptas. For the Gupta period, however eminent a rôle it may have played in the development of art and literature, cannot justly be regarded as the border-line between two great periods of Indian History. In truth, like the Periclean Age of Athenian History with which it has been aptly compared, its function was not to open a new epoch, but to bring to a completion the influences that had been maturing during the preceding centuries. Nor can we subscribe to the view, supported as it is by high authority, which finds in the establishment of the Kushan dynasty the much sought-for division between Ancient and Mediaeval India; for the Kushan empire in Northern India, however inspired by foreign influences, did not differ in its essential features from the preceding Indian empires. Indeed it seems to us to be most convenient to draw the dividing line between the two periods in the last years of the 12th and the early years of the 13th centuries in Northern India, and almost exactly a century later in the South. Then was founded for the first time an extensive Muhammadan empire in the country. Of the contrast between these two periods—the one preceding and the other following the Muhammadan conquest—it is easy to form an exaggerated opinion; for it must be remembered that the new rulers, owing to the paucity of their numbers and their lack of administrative capacity, left the work of civil administration at first largely to the Hindu princes and chiefs owing a more or less definite allegiance to the paramount power. It must also be admitted that the famous system of administration which was built up later by the genius of Sher Shah and Akbar was anticipated in all its leading features by the best Hindu sovereigns of earlier times. Even the growth of the vernacular literature, which has been acclaimed by a well-known historian as one of 'the gifts of the Muslim Age to India', was not an innovation, as it was paralleled earlier by the development of the Pāli canonical and non-canonical literature of the Buddhists, as well as the Ardha-Māgadhī and Apabhraṃśa canonical works of the

by a recent Indian author, Major B. D. Basu, in his work entitled *Rise of the Christian Power in India* (2nd ed., Calcutta 1931), which describes the origin and development of British dominion in our country down to the

Indian rebellion of 1857. The author justifies his title by the implausible argument that the professed object of British administrators in India has been to encourage the conversion of its people to Christianity.

Jainas. Nevertheless the Muslim conquest, because of the new influences which it introduced into the country, may fitly be called the harbinger of a new Age. With it came not only a new and fiercely monotheistic faith, but also new ideas of government, new schools of jurisprudence, new languages and literatures with their canons of literary taste and models of style, new styles of architecture, a new code of social manners and new modes and fashions of living. These influences in course of time left a profound stamp upon all classes of the Hindu population. Above all, the Muhammadan conquest brought a new factor into the complex mass of Indian humanity, a factor which mainly owing to the inflexibility of its religious creed has retained to this day something of its exotic character.⁵

We have selected the period of Muslim conquest of the country between the late twelfth and the early thirteenth centuries as the most convenient landmark of the transition from Ancient to Mediaeval India. Like all great historical movements, however, this was a slow process which was spread through several centuries. Its beginnings may be traced to the conquest of Sindh (711—712 A. D.) by the Arabs, which drove a wedge of Muhammadan dominion into the country. Then came in succession the fall of the outworks of the Indian defence and the outposts of Hindu civilization in the Afghan highlands, the conquest of Peshwar by the Amir Sabuktigin, and the destructive inroads of his famous son Sultan Mahmud. Other signs of the coming change may be traced in the fields of social and religious life of the people. The victories of Sultan Muhammad of Ghor carried forward, but did not complete, the transition from the Ancient to the Middle Ages.⁶

Turning to the Modern period, we think we can most conveniently trace it from the administration of the Marquis of Wellesley (1798-1804). The transition from Mediaeval to Modern India, like that from the Ancient to the Middle Ages, extends over a long period of time. Its beginnings may be carried back to Vasco de Gama's discovery of the Cape route in 1498, which for the first time brought a West-European power into direct contact with India. Among further steps leading to this movement may be mentioned the transfer of command of the Indian Ocean from the Arabs to the Portuguese, the elimination of the French

⁵ Dividing line between Ancient and Mediaeval India:—(a) death of Harsha (Iswari Prasad, *History of Mediaeval India*, Allahabad 1925; cf. James Kennedy, *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II, Chap. VIII with the alternative title of *The Mediaeval History of Northern India* applied to the period 650-1200 A.D.); (b) rise of the Imperial Guptas (Sir John Marshall, *Guide to Sanchi*, p. 7 and F. J. Richards, *Indian Antiquary*, February, 1930); (c) establishment of the Kushan dynasty (Rapson, *Ancient India*, p. 147). The last view is

implicit in the title '*Ancient India*' applied by the Editor of *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, covering the period "from the earliest times to about the middle of the first century A.D." On the rise of the vernacular literature as a gift of Muslim rule, vide Sir Jadunath Sarkar's work *India through the Ages*, pp. 77-81. On the fundamental changes arising from the impact of militant Islam into India, vide Chap. VII below.

⁶ For a complete discussion on the above subject, vide Chap. XVII below.

from the Indian stage in the Carnatic wars, the conquest of Bengal by Clive, and the wars and alliances of Warren Hastings. It was, however, left to Wellesley to plan and carry out those feats of diplomacy and warfare that made the British the paramount power in India except the Punjab. In trying to discover the specific features of the Modern period, we must, again, beware of the risk of exaggeration. Thus the system of administrative organisation which is one of the crowning triumphs of British rule in this country, however enriched and perfected by the lessons of modern wisdom and experience, followed in the main the lines of the best administrations in the past. And yet we must admit that the advent of the British rule introduced a number of momentous changes which made it the herald of a new age—the Modern period of Indian History. It broke down the isolation of the country to an extent undreamt of before. Within the limits of the country itself the Railway, the Telegraph and the printing-press, combined with the influences of a common administration and system of education, helped to break down provincial barriers, and created for the first time a truly national consciousness. Above all, the network of schools and colleges, which has been one of the principal gifts of British rule, helped to sow the seeds of Western ideas broadcast among the keenest and the most intelligent section of the people. These ideas fructified in the intellectual Renaissance which not only opened to India the stores of Western learning and restored to her much of her lost cultural heritage, but quickened into a new activity almost every branch of her national life.⁷

EPILOGUE

With the closing years of the fifth decade of this century there has dawned a new era fraught with the promise of high fulfilment of India as well as of the other countries of the Asian continent. The liberation of the Asian nations from the shackles of European colonialism has had the result of unleashing a tremendous amount of energy on their part for their own uplift at home and for assertion of their rightful place in international politics. In this grand co-operative enterprise India has been manfully striving to better the standard of living of her countless millions, and to adjust her old cultural values to the modern requirements. What is more, she has been using all her influence to act as a mediator between the two great hostile camps into which the civilized world is unfortunately divided at present, so as to save humanity from the perils of complete annihilation under the recent conditions of warfare. In this process

⁷ On India's reaction to the influences of British rule, vide Chap. VII below. The suggestion of Mr F. J. Richards (*Indian Antiquary*, February 1930) that the year 1500 A.D. when 'the Sultanates gave place to the Mughals'

marked the transition from Mediaeval to Modern India is clearly untenable, since the advent of the Mughals did not bring in its train such fundamental changes as to make it the starting-point of a new Age.

India's historical *role* has undergone a complete transformation. A dependancy ruled with but slight resistance by a foreign power scarcely twenty years back, she has all at once sprung to the position of complete mistress of her own household as well as a factor in world-politics.

CHAPTER VII

THE DYNAMICS OF INDIAN HISTORY

INTRODUCTORY

A fundamental problem that has again and again risen to the surface in the course of India's long and eventful history has been created by the periodical weakening, if not break-down, of the vitality of her spirit and her institutions, leaving her a prey to violent internal disorders often accompanied by the evils of foreign conquest and subjection. The consideration of this problem necessarily involves the discussion of another question, namely, that of India's reaction to these periodical dangers threatening her very existence.

The key to the solution of this twofold question may be found, we think, in the thoughtful analysis of our history and our civilization which has been given by a great Indian thinker of our age, the late Sri Aurobindo Ghose.¹ The fundamental cause of the growth and decline of India's civilization, he writes, is the strengthening and weakening of 'her ancient spirit and characteristic soul'. This last comprises three qualities, namely, first and foremost, her spirituality which is 'the master-key of the Indian mind'; secondly, 'her stupendous vitality, her inexhaustible power of life and joy of life, her almost unimaginably prolific creativeness,' thirdly and lastly, 'her strong intellectuality, at once austere and rich, robust and minute, powerful and delicate, massive in principle and curious in detail'.

The theory of the Mahābhārata

Before applying the above test to the general course of our past history, we may notice the very interesting, if imperfect, answer given by an ancient political theorist in the pages of our great national epic, the *Mahābhārata*. This takes the form of Bhīshma's answer to Yudhishtira's question in the course of what the author describes in the same context as the last political testament of the *doyen* of the Kuru race. When all the people,² asks Yudhishtira, take up arms in disregard of their respective duties, when the strength of the Kshatriya power is on the wane and when the king ceases to function as protector, what should be their refuge? Bhīshma's reply involves a vigorous plea for concerted action on a mass scale. At such a crisis, he explains, the castes headed by the Brāhmaṇas

¹ In his work *Renaissance in India* (reprinted from the *Ārya*, August-November 1918), pp. 7-29.

² *Mahābhārata*, Book XII Chap. 79, Vv. 12-19 (critical ed., Poona).

should seek their own salvation by means of gifts, austerities and sacrifices, as well as benevolence and self-restraint. When the king being crowned with victory, Bhīshma further observes, has re-established peace in his kingdom, the castes should betake themselves to their respective duties, but when disorder has set in and when the robbers have created confusion (of castes and duties), all castes may take up arms with impunity. While such are the duties of the people in general, a special responsibility rests upon the Brāhmaṇas. Among the castes, we are told in the same context, those that are strong through the knowledge of the Vedas should rise up on every side, and they should increase the king's strength 'like the gods strengthening the might of Indra'. The wise king, Bhīshma explains, should recover his position by the strength of the Brāhmaṇa power, for this is the only support of the king with declining strength. The above extract inculcates two principles for the people's guidance in a grave political crisis. These relate in the first place to mass-uprising by violent as well as non-violent means, and secondly, invigoration of the temporal by the spiritual power.

Four critical periods of Indian history

A. The post-Maurya period

Let us now turn to the verdict of history. It will be convenient for our purpose to take up by way of illustration four successive epochs in our history. These are, firstly, the period following the downfall of the Maurya empire (c. 200 B.C.—200 A.D.); secondly, the period of the impact of militant Islam (from the close of the twelfth century to the early years of the fourteenth century A. D.); thirdly, the period of decline and fall of the Mughal empire (c. 1660—1760 A.D.); fourthly and lastly, the period of the impact of British imperialism and its conflict with Indian nationalism (c. 1800—1947 A.D.).

In the last quarter of the third century B. C. the mighty empire of the Mauryas which had for three generations united the whole of Northern India with a large portion of the Deccan under a strong and centralised administration began to dissolve into a number of comparatively petty States. This gave the opportunity to the ambitious Greek kings of Bactria to pierce the unguarded passes on our north-west frontier and spread their victorious arms over the Indus and the Upper Ganga basins. With the decay of the Greek power hordes of foreigners (Sakas, Parthians, Yueh-chi and others) poured across our north-west frontier from their Central and West Asian homes, and they carved out for themselves kingdoms and principalities in Northern and Western India. To the evil produced by this complete break-up of India's political unity and its partial subjection to the foreign yoke was added that of acute social and religious differences caused by the contemporary historical movements. It may easily be inferred from the scanty evidence at our disposal that the foreign settlers brought with them their own social institutions and

religious beliefs and practices. Among the Indian peoples themselves the rise of heretical sects could not but involve a great disturbance of the Brahmanical social and religious order. Already in the preceding period Buddhism, thanks to the proselytising zeal of Aśoka and his missionaries, had been transformed from a local cult in Eastern India into an All-India religion and had even begun its conquest beyond the seas. There is reason to conclude that Jainism at the same time was on the way to become an All-India religion. What havoc was produced by the intrusion of the alien races and the overthrow of the traditional social and religious standards is told from the Brahmanical point of view under a thinly disguised announcement of the evils of the *Kali Age* in *Mahābhārata*, Book III Chaps. 188-90. And yet in the midst of this intense gloom and despair the seeds were sown of a brilliant Indian revival specially in a Brahmanical garb. Thus, in the first place, the whole body of social and religious laws of Brahmanism was amplified and put together in the authoritative *Smṛitis* of Manu and Yājñavalkya. Simultaneously the whole cycle of Brahmanical myths, legends and traditions as well as the Brahmanical system of individual and social ethics was incorporated into the old epic story of the *Mahābhārata* so as to give it its present encyclopaedic character. In all this work of systematisation we can detect a manifestation of the principle of intellectuality which, according to our great philosopher-saint quoted above, forms the third characteristic of the Ancient Indian spirit. In the next place the Brahmana canonist just mentioned emphasised the observance by adherents of their faith (irrespectively of differences of castes) of such virtues as truthfulness, purity and self-control, while the masters of the new school of Buddhism known as Mahāyāna distinguished themselves by their altruistic devotion to the cult of universal welfare in place of the self-centred zeal of the old school for individual salvation. We can trace these developments to the influence of the principle of spirituality which has been acclaimed above as the first characteristic of the Ancient Indian spirit. In the third place, the foreign settlers voluntarily absorbed within an incredibly short space of time not only the outward forms and symbols, but also the inner spirit of our civilisation. This was indicated by their adoption of the Indian language and script as well as names (or surnames), and their zealous adherence to the Indian religions. Not to speak of the use of coin-legends in the Indian *Prākṛit* and *Kharoṣṭhī*, script by the Indo-Greek kings as early as the beginning of the second century B.C., we hear of Greeks making donations through the same medium in favour of Buddhist foundations from the first century B.C. The most interesting of these records is that of Heliodorus, the Greek ambassador of king Antialkidas of Taxila at the court of Vidiśā. This commemorates the erection of a stone pillar in honour of Vāsudeva, 'the god of gods,' by one who devoutly called himself a *bhāgavata*. Where the Greeks with their notorious contempt for barbarians had led the way, it was easy for the less sophisticated Śakas and other Central

and Western Asian tribes to follow. The first important Buddhist missions to China were led by monks of Śāka, Parthian and Yueh-chi birth in the second and third centuries A.D. In the Upper Ganga valley we have a unique record (Mathura lion-capital inscription) commemorating the Buddhist piety of the ruling Śāka family of Mathura in the early years of the first century A.D. In Western India the greatest of the Śāka rulers, Rudradāman, as we learn from his famous record (Junagadh Rock Inscription of the Śāka year 72), took pride in describing himself as a model king after the Indian standards, while his son-in-law Ushavadāta in the best Indian princely tradition divided his extensive charities between Brahmanism and Buddhism. On their side the Brahmanical exponents of the Sacred Law met these Hinduised foreigners halfway by giving them (*Manu* Chap. X vv. 43-44, *Mahābhārata* Book XIII, Chap. 33, vv. 21-22; Chap 35., vv. 17-18) the status of Kshatriyas although degraded from their pristine purity. That this precept was translated into practice is proved by the recorded instances of marriages of Śāka princesses with kings of the orthodox Sātavāhana and Ikshvāku dynasties. In this process of conscious assimilation of the foreigners within the orthodox Hindu social fold, it is easy to detect the influence of that abounding vitality which has been stated above to be the second characteristic of our ancient spirit. This feature is indicated still more strongly by the rise of powerful indigenous dynasties (Sātavāhanas, Chetas, Bhāraśivas and Guptas), who halted the advance of the foreign ruling houses, and what is more, helped to recover the territories lost to them by the Indians. With the overthrow of the last Śāka ruler of Gujarat and Malwa and the annexation of his kingdom to the Gupta empire by Chandragupta II in the closing years of the fourth century A.D., the last vestige of foreign dominion disappeared from our soil. The triumph of captive India over her captor was complete on the social as well as the political plane.

B. The period of impact of militant Islam

By the close of the twelfth century A.D. the vitality and vigour of the Indian people appear to have undergone a lamentable decline. Literature and art, it would seem, lost much of their old creative power, while religion lay encumbered by a mass of forms and ceremonies, and society was fixed in a rigid mould.³ A century earlier a discerning foreign observer, Al-Beruni, traced this evil of stagnation of the Indians to its source in their rigid isolation producing among them an overweening conceit in their own greatness and contempt for foreign peoples. When therefore the mantle of militant Islam fell upon the Turks filled with the characteristic energy and capacity of their race, the Hindu kingdoms of Northern India succumbed to their attacks with surprising rapidity (1192—1203 A.D.). On the ruins of these kingdoms arose the Sultanate of Delhi which thereafter held the country by military rule.

³ On the above vide Chap. XVII, p. 362.

When almost a century later (1294—1311) the invading forces of the Sultanate overflowed into the Deccan and South India, the old Hindu kingdoms were overthrown with almost as much swiftness as those of Northern India in the past. What havoc the invaders, inspired alike by religious zeal and love of plunder almost of an elemental force, produced among the indigenous centres of piety and culture is testified to by the Muslim chroniclers, whose testimony is corroborated by the existing condition of our ancient archaeological remains. In the context of India's vital problem of cultural existence at this period, the coming of the invaders was an event of outstanding significance. The settlers, whose numbers were being continually swelled by the threefold process of birth, conversion and migration, introduced into our land a new creed, new languages and literatures and even a new script, new ideas of State and government, new types of art and architecture, a new code of social manners, and new models and fashions of living. What is more, because of the inflexibility of their religious creed which allowed no compromise with polytheism, the settlers were not absorbed in the Indian social system, but they remained (as their descendants still remain) a distinct social and cultural unit. In the field of politics the Delhi Sultanate, retaining its essential military character to the end, failed to win the support of the vast majority of its subjects. No sooner therefore than it reached its peak in the early years (c. 1338-39 A.D.) of the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughuq, it began to break up into a group of independent kingdoms founded by ambitious provincial governors. The last remnant of the Sultanate was drained of its life-blood by the invasion of the fierce Timur (1398 A.D.) which was attended with plunder and massacre on an extensive scale. The Sultanate nevertheless dragged an inglorious existence till it was extinguished by the founder of the Mughal dynasty in 1526 A.D.

What was India's reaction to this challenge to her existence, the greatest she had encountered so far in her history? We can trace this reaction in three principal directions. In the first place our Hindu legists commencing from Lakshmidhara in Northern India and Hemādri in the Deccan wrote a series of *Smṛiti* Digests systematising with almost pedantic thoroughness all branches of the ancient social and religious law. Between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries other authors like Kṛishṇānanda, Brahmānanda Giri, Purnānanda and Raghunātha Tarkavāgīsha in Bengal, prepared equally comprehensive Digests dealing with the Tāntric religious ritual. These ponderous endeavours evidently represented the feature of intellectuality in our ancient cultural inheritance to which reference has been made above. It is, however, extremely doubtful if the intellectual effort behind these learned compilations would have sufficed to save India from the danger of disintegration at this critical period. Fortunately for her the very extremity of the danger called forth an outburst of her ancient spirituality on a scale unknown before or since. Between the fourteenth and the seventeenth centuries almost every geo-

graphical unit in our vast land produced its typical saint and mystic, their lives and teachings forming an imperishable record in the annals of our Middle Ages. Such are Rāmānanda (14th century) and Kabir (14th-15th centuries) in Uttara Pradesh, Chaitanya (1481-1533) in Bengal, Śaṅkaradeva in Assam, Dādu in Rajasthan, Nānak (1496-1530) in the Punjab, Vallabhāchārya in Gujarat, and lastly, Jñānadeva, Nāmadeva, Ekanātha, Tukārāma and Rāmadāsa (late 13th—17th centuries) in Mahārāshṭra. These reformers, who were drawn from all ranks of society (including the untouchables) and from both sexes and who spoke in the language of the people, had often a distinct individuality of their own. To take one instance, the successive phases of Maratha mysticism are described by a recent scholar, Prof. Ranade,⁴ as follows:—(1) Age of Jñānadeva ('instinctive mysticism'), (2) Age of Ekanātha ('synthetic mysticism'), (4) Age of Tukārāma ('personalistic mysticism'), and (5) Age of Rāmadāsa ('activistic mysticism'). Nevertheless the mediaeval Indian mystics agree on the fundamentals of their teaching. Such are the ideas of the unity of god, the futility of forms and ceremonies of worship, the unreality of caste and the necessity of self-purification, and absolute devotion to the Deity for attaining salvation. Kabir, Dādu and Nānak distinguished themselves by the catholicity of their teaching which embraced the essence of Hinduism and Islam. The spirit of these teachers may be illustrated by three short extracts from their writings.

"O Servant, where dost thou seek Me? Lo! I am beside thee. I am neither in temple nor in mosque; I am neither in *Kaaba* nor in *Kailash*.

Neither am I in rites and ceremonies, nor in *Yoga* and renunciation. If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see Me: thou shalt meet Me in a moment of time.

Kabir says, 'O Sadhu! God is the breath of all breath'."

"This universe is the *Veda*, the creation is the *Koran*. The Pandits and the Kazis are indeed deceived when they think that the whole world is encompassed within the leaves of their dry books. The heart of the worshipper is the page on which the story of the universal Truth is being written in letters of life. When all these hearts unite in the vast universe of man, there you will find all the *Vedas* and the *Koran*."

"Say, Nanak: '(When) through the Guru the illusion is lost, Allah and Parabrahma are (seen as) one; temple and mosque are the same, worship and prostration are the same, all men are one, but various are the forces (leading them). Allah and Abhekh are the same, *Purāṇa* and *Quran* are the same—one only in (their) essence (as) One alone made (them) all'."

⁴ In his work *Indian Mysticism: the mysticism of Mahārāshṭra*.

⁵ The above extracts are quoted respectively from the translations of Kabir by Rabindranath Tagore (*One hundred*

poems of Kabir), of Rajjabji (a disciple of Dādu) by Kshitimohan Sen (*The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II p. 257), and of Nānak by Duncan Greenlees (*The Gospel of the Gurugranth Sahib*, pp. 209-10).

Let us try to estimate the influence of the medieval saints and mystics upon their environment. It must be admitted that such a fundamental Hindu social institution as caste remained for the most part unaffected by their teaching.⁶ Still less influence was exercised by them on the contemporary political life. It is rare to find among these early teachers even such remonstrance as that of Nānak who, stung by the horrors of Babur's invasion of the Punjab, passionately condemned the pusillanimous Lodi Sultan, while upbraiding God Himself for His apparent supineness.

“When there was such slaughter, such groaning, didst thou not feel pain?

Creator, Thou belongest to all.

If a powerful party beat another powerful party, it is no matter for anger;

But if a ravenous lion fall upon a herd of cows, then the master of the herd should show his manliness.”

And yet the profound influence of the mediaeval saints upon the spiritual life of our people cannot be gainsaid. They became the founders of sects which have been flourishing down to our own times. In their own times their catholic teachings found a responsive echo in the endeavours of the Emperor Akbar and still more of his large-hearted but unfortunate descendant Prince Dara Sukoh, towards opening the treasures of Hindu religious literature to the world of Islam.

In the third and last place the undying vitality which is the second characteristic of our ancient spirit manifested itself during this period in a great revolt in South India against the Sultanate of Delhi, which resulted in the foundation of the famous kingdom of Vijayanagar (c. 1330 A.D.). The founders of the new kingdom, Harihara I and Bukka I, were aided in their uprising by two distinguished Brāhmaṇa brothers Mādhavācharya (afterwards called Vidyāranya) and Sāyaṇācharya, thus furnishing a concrete instance of that principle of co-operation of the spiritual with the temporal power which had been enjoined by the theorist in the *Mahābhārata* extract quoted above. The movement in favour of political independence was accompanied by an immense religious revival on the intellectual plane. For while Mādhavācharya systematised the old *Smṛiti* Law through his famous commentary on *Parāśara-smṛiti*, Sāyaṇācharya produced his monumental series of commentaries on the Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*. For two centuries and a half the Vijayanagar kingdom maintained the barrier of the Krishṇa and the Tungabhadra against the advance of the Muslim power in South India and served as an asylum of Hindu religion and culture. And

⁶ On Chaitanya's attitude towards caste, vide the learned work of Dr. Sushil Kumar De, *Early History of Vaishnava Faith and Tradition in Bengal*, pp. 80-81n. On caste in Sikhism down

to the time of Guru Govind Singh, vide *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I pp. 66-67 by Teja Singh and Ganda Singh.

yet in the end it succumbed to the attack of that power because of the inherent defect of its political organisation which rested largely on feudalism, and the mistaken military and financial policy of its rulers which involved the complete economic exhaustion of the people.⁷

C. The period of decline and fall of the Mughal Empire

During the seventeenth century and specially in its latter half the mighty fabric of the Mughal Empire which had been built up by the genius of Akbar and which ensured peace and prosperity to our land under an efficient and centralised administration entered on the path of decline. Among the causes of this catastrophe the first place must be given, as has been well observed,⁸ to the abandonment by the later emperors of 'the two salient features of Akbar's land-revenue arrangements upon which the prosperity of the empire mainly depended, namely, the payment of official salaries in cash, and the obligation on the collectors of revenue to deal direct with individual cultivators'. Other causes are to be found in the laxity of imperial control over the administration and the crushing land-revenue assessment under Akbar's successors, the draining of the financial resources of the empire through the costly extravagance of Shahjahan and the Deccan wars of Aurangzeb, and the rapid deterioration of the Mughal aristocracy under the enervating influence of pomp and luxury. Last but not the least among these causes is the reversal of Akbar's religious policy by Aurangzeb who aimed at founding a purely Sunni State wherein the other Muslim sects as well as the Hindus were to live on sufferance. This deprived the Mughal administrative service of its valuable Shiah recruits, while it led the Rajputs to withdraw their powerful support from the Mughal throne. In the first half of the eighteenth century the seal was set upon the decline of the Mughal empire by the series of Wars of Succession, the rebellions of the provincial governors and the disastrous invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali, not to speak of the rapid advance of the Maratha power of which we shall speak presently.

In the face of this grave crisis which overtook our land in the latter half of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century the ancient Indian spirit manifested itself with vigour and success in two distinct regions. In Maharashtra the earlier line of mystics and saints was completed by the advent of Tukārāma and Rāmadāsa, of whom the latter became the spiritual preceptor of the founder of the Maratha power. They both (and specially Rāmadāsa) impressed upon Shivaji sound lessons of statecraft. The latter saint in his well-known poem called *Ānandavana-bhuyana*, which has been characterised by Prof. Ranade as 'the Apocalypse of Rāmadāsa,' conjured up the vision of a

⁷ On the causes of decline and fall of the Vijayanagar kingdom, vide the thoughtful analysis of Prof. K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar (*Ramalinga*

Reddy Commemoration Volume, Part II, pp. 74-90).

⁸ By Edwardes and Garrett, *Mughal Rule in India*, p. 258.

Region of Bliss in which the oppressor had been laid low, and the Hindu religion as well as culture was flourishing under divine protection. In Shivaji were combined all the qualities of the ancient Indian spirit, namely, its spirituality, its vitality and its intellectuality. It was Shivaji's passionate devotion to the cause of Hinduism which was the greatest single factor in rousing the Maratha national sentiment against the whole might of Aurangzeb. Shivaji's civil administration, which comprised such advanced features as the creation of distinct departments of the central government and the assessment of land-revenue based upon measurement of the fields and its collection by governmental agency, ensured the blessings of peace and justice and equal protection among all classes of his subjects. His military administration rested upon a regularly paid and well-disciplined standing army, as well as a chain of forts with adequate provision for their defence. He developed and perfected the strategy of guerilla warfare which in the circumstances was best suited to the genius of his people and the physical geography of his land. 'His light cavalry stiffened with swiftfooted infantry', it has been well observed,⁹ 'was irresistible in the Age of Aurangzeb.' Above all the imperishable spirit which Shivaji bequeathed to his countrymen not only steeled them for their epic struggle with the forces of Aurangzeb in the immediately following period, but also led them under the able direction of the Peshwas of the House of Balaji Vishvanath on the wings of victory towards the goal of All-India dominion.

The second manifestation of the ancient Indian spirit in all its forms took place in the Punjab in the latter half of the seventeenth century under the guidance of the *gurus* of the sect founded by Nanak. When the fifth *Guru* Arjun was executed by order of Emperor Jahangir in 1606, his successor *Guru* Hargovind began to organise his followers on military lines so as to create among them the will to resist the aggressor. It was, however, the martyrdom of the ninth *Guru* Tegh Bahadur at the hands of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1675 which fired his young son and successor, the famous *Guru* Govind Singh, with a religious zeal for a thorough-going reform of his sect on military lines. He set before himself the task of converting his followers into a compact community free from priestly tutelage and based upon complete social equality. He thus created the community of the Purified Ones (*Khalsa*) which was bound together by a distinctive ceremony of baptism as well as distinctive dress, manners and even surnames, and he inspired them with belief in their divine mission to right the wrongs of men. After the death of their great *guru* the Sikhs passed through a fiery ordeal of persecution (1708-50) only to emerge as masters of the Punjab in the following half-century. Their fortunes reached their peak in the first part of the nineteenth century, when Ranjit Singh, "the Lion of the Punjab" united the greater part of the Indus valley with Kashmir under his rule and supported it by an army organised on the European model.

⁹ By Sir Jadunath Sarkar in his work *Shivaji and his times*, 4th ed., p. 367.

In the rest and by far the greater part of India the history of the eighteenth century is on the whole written in decay. It is true that even then there were not wanting saints who kept alive the torch of the ancient spirituality. Such was Rāmaprasāda Kavirañjana of Bengal, the author of numerous devotional lyrics in honour of the Great Mother which have become a classic in Bengali literature. In general, however, it is correct to state that the fount of the old Indian spirit ran dry at this period. In the political field, it is true, there were not wanting even at this period very able and successful rulers, Hindu as well as Muslim. Such were Baji Rao I and Mahadji Sindhia in the Maratha world, Murshid Kuli Khan in Bengal and Haidar Ali in Mysore. But none of these was able to base his State on firm foundations. The greatest of the Indian States, that of the Marathas, suffered from grave defects in its political and military system, some of which like the neglect of the economic factor went back to Shivaji's times, while others like the assignment of *ja igirs* in lieu of cash payments and the grant of offices in hereditary succession were due to the mistaken policy of his successors. Even the creation of European-trained battalions by the later Maratha rulers proved in the end to be their undoing¹⁰. With the death of its last great leaders the Maratha State-system entered upon a period of almost incessant anarchy which paved the way for its downfall. A similar anarchy, which overtook the Punjab in the years following the death of Ranjit Singh, ended in the political extinction of the Sikhs. On the whole, then, the severe verdict of the well-known Indian historian of this period¹¹ remains unshaken when he observes, "The Mughal Empire and with it the Maratha overlordship of Hindustan, fell because of the rottenness at the core of Indian society. This rottenness showed itself in the form of military and political helplessness. The country could not defend itself; royalty was hopelessly depraved or imbecile; the nobles were selfish and short-sighted; corruption, inefficiency and treachery disgraced all branches of the public service. In the midst of this decay and confusion, our literature, art and even true religion had perished."

D. The period of impact of British Imperialism and its conflict with Indian nationalism

In the century following the battle of Plassey the British, armed with all the resources of a first-rate European power and helped by the breakdown of the indigenous social and political systems, made themselves masters of our land to its furthest extremities. It was then that India felt for the first time the consequence of subjugation by a foreign power

¹⁰ On the defects and shortcomings of the Maratha States, vide (a) Sarkar, *Shivaji and his times*, pp. 357f, (b) *ibid*, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV pp. 104-11, and (c) G. S. Sardesai, *New history of the Maratha people*, Vol. II pp. 56-59.

¹¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV, pp. 343-44. A more balanced, but still severe judgment on the history of this period is that of H. Goetz, *The crisis of Indian civilisation in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries*, Calcutta, 1938.

ruling her as a dependency from a distant base. The evils of the East India Company's rule have been admitted by fair-minded British administrators and historians from early times down to the present. The great plunder which disgraced the early years of the Company's rule in Bengal led directly to the dreadful famine of 1769-70 which cost the lives of fully one-third of its inhabitants. When at a later date Britain as a result of its Industrial Revolution emerged as the greatest manufacturing nation in the world, the selfish commercial policy of the British Government forced free trade upon India, resulting in the ruin of her age-old domestic industries. The land-revenue policy of the Company's government imposed a crushing burden upon the cultivators, which was aggravated by the evil of periodical settlements over the greater part of our land. The pressure of the Company's administration produced among our people habits of long acquiescence in foreign rule killing all initiative and of dependence upon government leading to disappearance of the indigenous institutions of local self-government, while it involved the exclusion of Indians from all higher ranks of the administration to the debasement of their character. It is true that the evils set forth above were to some extent offset by the benefits which have justly been claimed for British rule in India by writers of the then ruling race. The fourfold feature of British administration, namely 'its impersonality, its recognition of personal liberty, its integrity and its insistence on equality before the law', has been productive of various benefits among our people. These comprise 'the maintenance of peace and order, the rule of law, the belief in liberty, the modernisation of the country, the laying of firm financial foundations for the State, the fight against famine and disease, the increase in agricultural resources and the provision of stable political and economic conditions in which commerce and industry could develop'. Again, the opening of the door of Western education to Indians on an increasing scale, which lies to the credit of the British Indian Government since the time of Bentinck, has led to the incalculable benefit of linking India with modern thought.¹²

However grave might be the defects and shortcomings of British rule in India, it was strong enough to crush all armed attempts of our people to throw off its yoke down to its last days. With the suppression of the Indian independence movement of 1857-58 which was 'the first crude expression of India's urge for freedom'¹³, the British government entrenched itself in our land more firmly than ever with the strength derived from reorganisation of the whole administrative system and a growing responsiveness to the wishes and sentiments of our people. How did India react to this environment in the context of her first truly foreign

¹² The above is based upon the work of Sir Percival Griffiths, *The British Impact on India*, pp. 230-32, 361-71, 379-404. For the opinions of the early British observers, vide the quotations from Munro, Malcolm and

Bishop Heber in the work *Rise and fulfilment of British rule in India* by Thompson and Garraat, App. B.

¹³ Hirendranath Mukherjee, *India Struggles for Freedom*, p. 48.

subjection? As Sri Aurobindo has well remarked, it is characteristic of the strength of spirituality in our traditional make-up that the first Indian reaction has manifested itself in the sphere of religion. Characteristic, again, is the fact noted by the same thinker that in this sphere unlike every other sphere 'every impulse has been throughout powerfully creative'. To quote the same authority, 'The Brāhma Samāj combined a Vedāntic first inspiration, outward forms akin to those of English Unitarianism and something of its temper, a modicum of its temper, a modicum of Christian influence, a strong dose of religious rationalism and intellectualism. It is noteworthy, however, that it started from an endeavour to restate the Vedānta. The Ārya Samāj in the Punjab founded itself on a fresh interpretation of the truth of the Veda and an attempt to apply old Vedic principles of life to modern conditions. The movement associated with the great names of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda has been a very wide synthesis of past religious motives and spiritual experience topped by a re-affirmation of the old asceticism and monasticism, but with new living strands in it and combined with a strong humanitarianism and zeal of missionary expansion. There has been too the movement of orthodox Hindu revivalism.'¹⁴ This last is associated with such names in Bengal as those of Sasadhara Tarka-chudamani and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. These movements have often been accompanied with strong and vigorous efforts in the direction of social and educational reform as well as dedication to social service.

Next to its application to religion may be mentioned the operation of the Ancient Indian spirit in the fields of literature, art and science. The new vernacular literatures of India, at first clearly imitative of Western models, have gradually given rise to original creations soaring into the realm of world-literature in such works as those of Rabindranath Tagore. The same tendencies have been at work in the fields of art and science. It is in the sphere of politics that the reaction of the Indian mind has been most tense and effective. The pressure of a uniform administration, the impact of a common type of education, the growth of a strong middle class, the recovery of our long-lost cultural heritage through the efforts of generations of scholars in this country and abroad, the voices of our great literary artists and the rapid development of communications, not to speak of the examples of more fortunate nations outside our limits, have helped to knit together the diverse elements of our vast population by a bond of nationality based upon the community of interests and sentiments. In this process it is easy to discover the simultaneous operation of the three component factors of our ancient spirit, namely, its spirituality, its vitality and its intellectuality. In the last half-century the nationalist movement born out of the above-mentioned sentiment of common nationality has led our people at first with slow and halting steps and afterwards with increased momentum along the path of independence. Among the important milestones on this road towards

¹⁴ Vide *Renaissance in India*, pp. 50-52, 54.

liberation may be mentioned the foundation of the Indian National Congress (1885), Tilak's militant Hindu Nationalism in Maharashtra (1894 and the following years), the Swadeshi movement in Bengal under the inspiring leadership of Sri Aurobindo and other intellectuals (1905-08), the rise of the Indian nationalist party (1906-12) with its goal of complete independence, the movement in favour of armed revolution (1906 and the following years), the mass upheaval and its direction along the paths of non-violence, social justice, temperance and home-spinning by Mahatma Gandhi (1920 and the following years), the organisation of the industrial workers and the peasants by the Communist party (1924 and the succeeding years), the Congress movements in favour of non-cooperation (1920-22) and Civil Disobedience (1930-33) for supporting the cause of independence, the adoption of the "Quit India" resolution by the All-India Congress Committee and its aftermath in the shape of a country-wide rebellion (1942), the epic struggle of the Indian National Army under the direction of Netaji Subhas Bose with the British forces in Burma (1943-45) and the nation-wide strikes including those in the Indian Navy and Air Force (1945-46). These high endeavours were offset by the upsurge of the Muslim separatist movement, of which the fruits may be successively enumerated as the foundation of the Muslim League (1906), the communal electorate clause of the Government of India Act (1909) solemnly accepted and extended by the Congress in the Lucknow Pact (1916), the orgy of communal riots and massacres commencing with the Moplah rebellion (1921), the adoption of the Pakistan resolution by the Muslim League (1940) and the Congress acquiescence in the resulting partition of our motherland (1947). Thus it came about that when on the memorable 15th August 1947 we gained the prize of independence after nearly half a century of almost ceaseless struggle with one of the strongest powers in the world, we acquired a divided inheritance stained by the blood and tears of multitudes of our countrymen. The events leading up to this grand consummation, which with all its shortcomings is one of the greatest in the modern history of the world, are so recent that it is impossible for the historian as yet to pass a dispassionate judgment upon the actors in the principal scenes. Let us all join in hoping that our rulers and statesmen will be spared sufficient wisdom, courage and patriotism to lead our country to the van of the world's progress.

PART III
STUDIES IN
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CHAPTER VIII

THE GENIUS OF ANCIENT INDIAN POLITY

The enormous range over which the Ancient Indian polity extends both in space and time is a historical truism. It seems, therefore, unsafe to build any generalisation whatever on the characteristics of such a widespread institution. Nevertheless some notable attempts have been made in this direction in recent years. It is proposed in the present chapter to examine some of the most typical of these attempts.

The current estimates of the genius of the Ancient Indian polity resolve themselves in the first place into two contradictory lines of thought divided not unnaturally in the recent political context on racial lines. Let us begin with the views of two representatives of what may be called the adverse school of critics on this point. In his text-book entitled *The Oxford History of India* the late Dr. Vincent Smith declared Indian polity to be lacking in 'the interest attaching to the gradual evolution of political institutions'. 'The early tribal constitutions of a republican character', he explains, 'all perished without leaving a trace.' In the result 'autocracy is substantially the only form of government with which the historian of India is concerned.' This is supported by the bold argument that the theory of 'several modern Hindu authors' about the limited or constitutional character of Ancient Indian monarchy is due to a misapprehension based upon a too serious acceptance of the admonitions of text-book writers about the duties of the ideal king. Like the tribal constitutions of the north, Dr. Smith continues, the self-governing village institutions of the South perished long ago, having been killed by rulers without any sympathy for the old indigenous administration. To the above formidable indictment the author adds that the development of municipal institutions has remained a blank page in Indian history. A much more sweeping and less closely reasoned, though essentially similar estimate is given by Prof. H. Dodwell in his Introduction to the last volume (Volume VI) of the *Cambridge History of India*, of which he is the general editor. Beginning with his astonishingly facile generalisation about the peoples of Asia who 'created great civilisations and founded 'strong, well-knit and durable social groups', but whose political organisations seldom rose above the primitive village community, Prof. Dodwell refers to 'the most instructive history' of the Aryan invaders of India. 'They carried with them', we are told, the same political gifts as those of 'their brethren in classical Greece and Rome', and 'they belonged to the stock which created the science and the art of politics': 'but their primeval tribal institutions and self-governing townships withered and decayed under the Indian Sun': 'the kings and emperors who arose after them were ever limited in their actions

by social and religious influences, but never shared their power with political institutions.'

Let us next turn to some representative views of the opposite school. The most original of these views is that of Dr. K. P. Jayaswal in his work *Hindu Polity*. In two successive chapters of this work concluding his exhaustive survey of Ancient Indian monarchy, Dr. Jayaswal thus sums up his estimate of its fundamental characteristics. Referring in the first place to what he thinks to be a number of checks on the king's authority, he observes that the king was regarded as 'the servant of the State' and as 'virtually a constitutional slave'. In the second place Dr. Jayaswal observes in the light of some alleged principles of the king's government that 'the monarchic State in Hindu eyes was a trust' created proximately for the material prosperity and ultimately for the moral well-being of the people. This conception reached its culmination in 'the fixed maxim that the king was the servant of the people getting his wages'. The third characteristic, derived by Dr. Jayaswal from his premise of the complete subordination of militarism and by contrast the paramount position of law in the Ancient Indian polity, is that it was 'essentially a civil State', its civil and legal character being the main cause of its extraordinary longevity. With the above we may compare the equally bold generalisation of Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerjee in his work *Chandragupta Maurya and his Times*. Here he describes in the context of the Mauryan polity what he considers to be the general characteristics of the Ancient Indian State. Starting with the thesis that Ancient India 'believed in the self-government of the group, in the extension of self-government from the sovereign at the top through all grades and strata of society down to the lowest classes in the villages', he observes that 'every village was self-governing', and that 'the unions of villages' formed 'self-governing federations'. Thus 'Ancient India was built up as a vast rural democracy.' Again, after stating how democracy 'descended to the villages and the lowest strata of the social structure', he concludes that 'Ancient Hindu monarchy was a limited monarchy under the very constitution of the State.' Quoting in this connexion a number of *Smṛiti* texts enjoining upon the king observance of the customs of various social, economic and other groups and maintenance of their agreements, Dr. Mookerjee further observes that 'these several groups were thereby empowered to legislate for themselves.' To the above he adds that Hindu thought conceived *dharma* as 'the true sovereign of the State, as the Rule of Law', the king being required 'to uphold and enforce the decrees of *dharma* as the spiritual sovereign'. 'The Maurya Empire', he observes at the end, 'had to fit itself into this traditional frame-work of administration.'

We may complete our account of the current estimates of the characteristics and tendencies of Ancient Indian polity by quoting the views of two other scholars who express themselves more guardedly than those mentioned above. In Chapter V (entitled 'Kingship') of his work

State and Government in Ancient India, Dr. A. S. Altekar, after enumerating his list of Ancient Indian notions of this institution (namely, the conception of the king's divinity because of his functional resemblance with the deities, that of kingship as a trust, and that of the king as a servant of the people) admits the failure of our ancient thinkers to devise 'constitutional checks in the modern sense of the word' on the king's powers. This defect, he thinks, was due to the fact that 'the idea of representative government was unknown both in the East and the West down to the sixteenth century' (*sic*). Nevertheless, according to Dr. Altekar, there were other checks 'which were sufficiently effective in normal times'. Such were the references to religious and spiritual sanctions for the king's guidance, the king's coronation-oath, the emphasis on the proper education and training of the princes, and 'the recognition of the right of subjects to depose or kill a tyrant'. Above all, 'our ancient constitutional thinkers' 'advocated and brought about an extensive decentralisation of governmental functions', which was 'the most effective and practical check upon the king's powers'. This consisted in entrusting 'village-councils, town-committees and district boroughs' with very wide administrative powers so much so that they 'to a great extent resembled small republics'. The above views are repeated in part in the concluding chapter (Chap. XVII) of Dr. Altekar's work *Estimate of Ancient Indian Polity*. Here after stating how monarchy in course of time 'became the order of the day', he observes 'that our political writers placed the highest possible ideals before the kingly order'. These ideals, however, could not frequently be realised in practice mainly because of the failure of our ancient Indian thinkers to develop constitutional checks on the king's powers. This failure in its turn was largely due to disappearance of Popular Assemblies in the post-Vedic period—a phenomenon arising not from the growing unsuitability of democracy for the Indian temperament, but because of the increasing size of the States unaccompanied by the idea of representation. This very difficulty, we are further told, led the ancient thinkers to recommend and bring about 'a great decentralisation of the functions of government' so much so that 'the powers of town and village councils in Ancient India were probably more extensive than those of similar bodies in any other polity, eastern or western, ancient or modern.'

The second view is that of Dr. R. C. Majumdar who draws in his work called *Ancient India* an interesting contrast between the types of the Ancient Indian polity in two successive historical periods. In the period extending from c. 600 B.C. to A.D. 300 we are told, 'the ideal form of government' involved a balance of 'three elements, the king, the bureaucracy and the people', each serving as a check upon the other, thus anticipating 'the German government before the First Great War': but in the following period ranging roughly from c. A.D. 300 to 1200 this balance was disturbed, and there was a general tendency towards

'weakening of the popular control and the establishment of unchecked bureaucracy or autocracy'. Analysing the causes of this 'anti-democratic' development Dr. Majumdar mentions particularly three contributory circumstances. These are firstly, 'the coalition between the priestly and the royal powers' following from the 'final triumph of orthodox Brahmanism over the heterodox religious sects' such that while 'the priest purchased the royal support by placing his own spiritual power at the disposal of his royal master', the latter 'protected the Brāhmaṇahierarchy, if necessary by force'; secondly, the increased rigidity of caste preventing concerted political action on the people's part and giving the king the opportunity to play the autocrat; and thirdly, the wide development of the religious sects causing the best intellects to concentrate on religious and philosophical studies and leaving politics to the mediocrities.¹

Before considering the trends of criticism of the Ancient Indian polity set forth above, we may make a few preliminary remarks. We may first observe that the alleged incapacity of the civilised peoples of Asia to create high political organizations with which we may compare the equally facile generalisation of some recent scholars about their incapacity for framing ideas and concepts of the State, is hardly worthy of any serious notice at the present day. Indeed the only value of such observations lies in the warning which they convey of the dangers to which even highly trained Western scholars, impressed by the consciousness of the immense superiority of their own civilisation at least on the political plane and not having the patience or the equipment needed to study alien civilisations, are liable to succumb when judging the ideas and institutions of Asian peoples. As regards the characteristic features of the Ancient Indian polity, the two admitted facts, namely, the long history of the republics in Northern India and that of the self-governing village assemblies in the South, are a sufficient refutation of the charge that Indian history is lacking in the gradual evolution of political institutions. Again, while the early Popular Assemblies (the *samiti* and the *sabhā*), with their undoubted right of debate and high, if undefined, constitutional status in relation to the king, contradict the theory of primitive tribal institutions of the Vedic Aryans, the explicit recognition of the customs of social and economic groups as a secondary source of the State law in the Brahmanical *Smṛitis* from first to last and the reference to the functions of the village assemblies and the town councils

¹ For exact refs. to the above estimates of Ancient Indian polity vide (a) V. A. Smith, *op. cit.* Parts I & II, *Introd.* pp. xi-xii, (b) H. Dodwell, *op. cit.* Vol. VI. *Introd.* p. vii, (c) Jayaswal, *op. cit.* Chap. XXXV 'Position of the Hindu king', and Chap. XXXVI 'Character of Hindu Monarchy', (d) Radha Kumud Mookerjee, *op. cit.* pp. 77, 79, 84,

(e) A. S. Altekar, *op. cit.* pp. 93, 97-98, 361-65, (f) R. C. Majumdar, *op. cit.* pp. 164, 447-48. In a different context (*op. cit.* pp. 215, 217) Dr. Altekar holds that not only were all classes and interests represented on the town-committees, but that these committees were a 'common feature of the Ancient Indian administration.'

in the historical inscriptions, disprove the contention that later Indian kings and emperors 'never shared their power with political institutions'.²

With these preliminary remarks we are now in a position to discuss somewhat fully the views quoted above about the characteristics of the Ancient Indian polity. This discussion raises a number of fundamental issues to which we have now to turn our attention. These are, firstly, *Is the complete decay of republican constitutions in Northern India due to their being alien to the genius of "the Brahmanical people" and their universal liking for autocracy?*; secondly, *How far did the village-assemblies and the town-councils in Ancient India function as democratic self-governing bodies, and whether, and if so how far, they helped to check most effectively the king's autocratic powers?*; thirdly, *Did the Smṛiti rules relating to the duties of the king (rājadharmā) and the nature of his government along with the similar ideas and principles in the technical works on polity and the works of general literature signify 'constitutional laws' governing the relation between the king and the people in the Ancient Indian State?*; fourthly and lastly, *Does the history of later development of the Ancient Indian polity disclose the failure of our ancient thinkers to realise in actual practice their high conceptions and ideals of kingship, or else a drift towards unchecked bureaucracy or autocracy in place of the balanced constitution of earlier times; and, if so, what were the causes thereof?*

I. *Is the complete decay of republican constitutions in Northern India due to their being alien to the genius of "the Brahmanical people" and their universal liking for autocracy?* As regards this issue Vincent Smith's theory of the Mongolian origin of the Ancient Indian republican peoples and the Tibetan affinities of their institutions, as has been shown by Dr. Jayaswal in a separate chapter of his *Hindu Polity* (Chap. XXI), rests on a series of far-fetched arguments and are contradicted by the authentic texts. To the above we may add that the historical records leave us in no doubt about the real causes of downfall of the Ancient Indian republics. In Eastern India the Lichchhavis and their sister republics appear to have succumbed to the twofold danger of their own internal dissensions and the ambition of the neighbouring dynasties (specially, the powerful kings of Magadha). In the North-West the Kshudrakas, the Mālavas and others seem to have been swept away by the destructive invasion of Alexander of Macedon. In the centuries immediately before and after Christ there is noticeable, alike in the political thought of the author of the *Sāntiparvan* and in the contemporary inscriptions, a general tendency of the republics towards concentration of political authority in the hands of a select few, or even of an individual military leader. These causes have no relation to the ethnic affiliation of the peoples concerned. In a later chapter we hope

² On the alleged failure of the Eastern peoples to have contributed to the idea of the State, vide Willoughby, *Political Theories of the Ancient World*, p. 14,

Nature of the State, p. 42 (discussed in the present writer's work *A History of Indian Political Ideas*, pp. 10, 12).

to show that the Indian republics were not, as alleged, tribal communities, but were as a rule real States comprising the different social strata after the traditional pattern.

Meanwhile a number of influences, not always Brahmanical, tended to fix the monarchic State as the standard type of polity in the ideas and institutions of the Indian people. Among these may be mentioned the long monarchical tradition extending back to the oldest Vedic times, the *Smṛiti* conception of the king as an integral unit of the social system ruled by its fundamental law of the duties of the castes and orders and the further *Smṛiti* view of the triple basis of the king's authority in his origin, his office and his functions, the authoritative *Arthaśāstra* conception of the ruler as the apex of the State structure comprising 'the seven limbs', and perhaps also the prestige of the great kings and emperors, both indigenous and foreign. The canonical belief in the immemorial antiquity of kingship is reflected not only in the *Mahābhārata* story of its creation in the First Age of the world by Brahmā, but also in the Buddhist and Jaina theories of its origin at the beginning of the present cycle of creation of the universe and of man and his institutions, while the popular belief in its universality is indicated by the stories in the literature of folk-lore represented by the Buddhist *Jātakas* and the much later *Kathāsaritsāgara*. Because of the cumulative influence of these factors the political tradition of India in the Gupta and later periods has been exclusively monarchical.

Do the above facts lend any support to the view that "the Brahmanical people" were always content with autocracy? The answer is found in a fundamental principle of the *Smṛitis* which leaves its stamp upon their rules of State law and even those of penance, and is followed in other works of Brahmanical literature. This is the principle that the king's authority over his subjects is matched by his obligation towards them, an obligation resting on the threefold basis of his divine ordination for the task of protection, the ethico-religious duty imposed upon him by the law (*dharma*) of his order, and his quasi-contractual relation with his subjects following from his collection of taxes. Reference may further be made to a principle laid down in the authoritative discourse of Bhīṣma in the *Mahābhārata*, namely, the right of the upper classes (and specially the Brāhmaṇas) to resist the evil ruler with varying degrees of intensity. Mention may also be made without comment on the remarkable analysis of the conditions of welfare of republics, which is likewise attributed to the same royal sage in the *Mahābhārata*.³

³ For Jayaswal's criticism of V. Smith's Mongolian theory vide *Hindu Polity*, Ch. XXI (pp. 170-79). Of the effects of Alexander's invasion upon the fortunes of the North-Western republics it has been rightly said by a Western writer (quoted in the work of Paul Masson-Oursel and others entitled *Ancient*

India and Indian Civilization, p. 89): "The same Macedonian imperialism was responsible for the enslavement of the cities of Attica and the Peloponnese and for the destruction of the republics of the Punjab." The theory of republics in the *Śāntiparvan* and the ideas of kingship in the *Smṛitis* and the

We may profitably compare the fortunes of the Ancient Indian republics sketched above with those of their European counterparts during the long interval between the first century B.C. and the end of the eighteenth century after Christ. Ever since the downfall of the Roman republican constitution and till the rise of the French revolutionary republic, writes an eminent English historian, the main political tradition of Europe has been monarchical. This was due at first to the two great factors of the Roman Empire and the Christian Church. 'When the Teutonic tribes found their way into the Roman Empire and established themselves in the Roman shell, their politics, partly from the needs of the situation, but partly from conscious reflection of the Roman model, assumed more and more the monarchical form, and divested themselves more and more of their democratic character.' In the Middle Ages while the chronic wars and the social inequality of feudalism did not favour the growth of the republican sentiment, monarchy found its support in the common freeman who needed its support against the rapacious nobles and the Roman Church, which received and expected from it material benefits. 'The political theory of the early Middle Ages... bears witness to this general belief in the necessity and divinity of kingship.' The mediaeval Italian cities which exhibited the spirit of the Ancient Roman republic disgraced themselves by their spirit of jealous exclusion, operating alike against rival factions, dependant cities, and the humblest elements of society. Thus they succumbed to the rule of despots whose crimes and caprices 'form one of the darkest and least credible pages in human history'. 'The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century was the great dissolvent of European conservatism. Yet the leaders of this great and comprehensive revolt were careful to mark their respect for the secular authority.' Only in the late eighteenth century a new phenomenon appeared in European history. 'The Republics hitherto known to Europe had either been civic, or federal, or essentially aristocratic, or a combination of all three... But the French Republic was very different from all these. It was a great unitary democratic State.'⁴

While it would be unwise to press the evidence of the European example too far (there being in Indian history no equivalent of a unified Empire and Church lasting through the centuries and of waves of incoming invaders with popular institutions), it will appear from the above that the complete replacement of republics by monarchies in both cases was purely due to a train of historical circumstances and not to an innate liking of an influential section of the people for the monarchic constitution in place of the alien republican one. It will further appear that the record

Mahābhārata and the *Purāṇas* as well as the Buddhist and Jaina works and the works of classical Sanskrit literature are discussed by the present writer fully in *A History of Indian*

Political Ideas, Chaps. III-IV, VIII-XII, XIV-XV, XVII-XXI, XXIII-XXVIII.

⁴ Vide H.A.L. Fisher, *The Republican Tradition in Europe*, pp. 3, 5, 7, 16, 34, 88.

of the Ancient Indian monarchies does not suffer much in comparison with that of their mediaeval European compeers.

II. *How far did the village-assemblies and the town-councils in Ancient India function as democratic self-governing bodies, and whether, and if so how far, they helped to check most effectively the king's autocratic powers?* Although the *grāmaṇi*, the village leader in peace and war in the later Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, is known to have occupied a position of great importance in the Vedic polity, our knowledge of the working of the village administration in the Vedic period is exceedingly scanty. It may, however, be presumed from the existence of powerful popular assemblies associated with the king in the government of the Vedic tribal States that the local affairs of the villages were usually decided by the villagers themselves. In the following period, that of the *Smṛitis* and the *Arthasāstra*, we notice a strong tendency towards organisation of the local administration on bureaucratic lines. Already in *Āpastamba-Dharmasūtra* (II 10.26.4-9) we hear of the king's officers in charge of villages and towns with their specified duties of protecting the property of the people and collecting the lawful taxes. In *Vishṇu-Smṛiti* and more fully in *Manu-Smṛiti* and the *Mahābhārata* we are introduced to a chain of royal officers with jurisdictions extending from single villages to larger and larger village groups, as well as to superintendents in charge of towns. The parallel system of the *Arthasāstra* shows a similar, but not identical, pattern of development of the local administration. The detailed description in Kautilya's work further indicates the stringent control exercised by the town-authorities over the citizens in the interest of political security as well as of municipal sanitation and public safety against calamities of various sorts. The contemporary account of Chandragupta Maurya's administration from the pen of Megasthenes mentions in general terms the same type of local administration with separate staffs of royal officers in charge of the rural and the urban areas. By contrast the references in these authorities even to village-assemblies are surprisingly few. In Kautilya's work we are told how village-elders in newly settled tracts were required (no doubt after the usual pattern) to act as trustees for the property of minors and of temples, while villagers with State encouragement constructed their public works and organised their simple recreations. In the *Jātakas* we have stories of villagers successfully remonstrating with the local land-owner against his orders prohibiting their time-honoured practices as well as of heads of village households assembling in the midst of the village for transaction of their local affairs. But of regularly constituted village councils entrusted with powers of local self-government there is as yet no trace.⁵

⁵ For refs. to the Vedic *grāmaṇi* and the much more obscure *grāmyavādin* (with his *sabhā*), vide the writer's work *Hindu Public Life*, Part I, pp. 20, 39-40,

104-08. For criticism of the view (Altekar, *op. cit.* pp. 121-32) that the Vedic *sabhā* was a village assembly, vide *ibid.*, p. 26. Chain of royal officers

It is to the period of the Imperial Guptas extending roughly from the fourth to the sixth century after Christ that we can trace with the help of contemporary inscriptions in North Bengal (an outlying region of the Empire) the first clear references to the association of representatives of important trades and professions with the town administration. Reference is made in another inscription from Madhya Pradesh (an equally outlying region of the Empire) to the traditional village committee of five members apparently as witness or trustee of a religious endowment. The records of various dynasties of Northern and Western India in the post-Gupta period contain sporadic references to village-assemblies, or to committees of village elders with appropriate functions. Reference is also made to town-councils with representatives of interests and classes, or even to whole town assemblies with adequate functions. Our fullest account of self-governing village-assemblies in later times relates to South India during the period of supremacy of the Imperial Cholas ranging from the ninth to the thirteenth century A.D., although instances of such assemblies with elected executive committees are found earlier in the records of the Imperial Pallavas of Kanchi and the Pāṇḍyas of Madura. Under the Imperial Cholas there were two types of autonomous village assemblies, namely, the ordinary type (*ur*) with its executive body known as *aluṅgaṇam*, *gaṇam* and so forth, and the special type (*sabhā*) with various committees (*vāriyams*) elected by the people. While the former type was generally associated with non-Brāhmaṇa villages, the villages inhabited by Brāhmaṇa house-holders followed the latter type. From a famous inscription of the time of the Chola king Parāntaka I, we learn that the *sabhā* of the particular village repeatedly framed its own rules (*vyavasthāi*) for constitution of its committees by a mixed method of

in charge of the local administration in the later *Smṛitis* and the *Arthaśāstra*—(a) officers in charge of 1, 10, 100 villages and their duties of protecting property and collecting lawful taxes. (*Vishnu-Smṛiti*, III 7-12), (b) officers in charge of 1, 10, 20, 100 and 1000 villages and the superintendent of towns and their duties (Manu VII 115-22-Mbh. XII 87. 4-12), (c) 1 *samābarta* in charge of the whole country-tract, 4 *sthānikas* in charge of its 4 divisions, and *gopas* in charge of 5 and 10 villages (Kauṭ. II 35), (d) 1 *nāgaraka* in charge of a whole town, 4 *sthānikas* in charge of its 4 wards, and *gopas* in charge of 5, 20 or 40 households (ibid II 36). Classes of magistrates in Chandragupta Maurya's administration (after Megasthenes):—(a) the *Asynomoi* ('officers in charge of the city'), (b) the *Agro-nomoi* (officers explained by modern scholars as resembling the Roman

aediles), and (c) officers in charge of the army. Functions of village assemblies etc. in the *Arthaśāstra* and the *Jātakas*:—(a) village elders as trustees (Kauṭ. III 1); (b) villagers constructing public works etc. (ibid III 10), (c) story of villagers' remonstrance against their *grāmabhojaka* (*Jāt.* No. 469 p. 115), (d) story of heads of 30 families of a village assembling on a certain day for transaction of village business (No. 31 p. 199), (e) story of 30 royal officers of another village assembling together for the same purpose (No. 302 p. 8). Altogether improbable is the inference (B.C. Sen, *Studies in Jātakas*, quoted with approval by Ratilal Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India*, p. 176) drawn from (d) and (e) to the effect that the village committee usually consisted of 30 members or thereabout, irrespectively of the total village population.

lot and election, or else by lot alone. The *sabhā* exercised a wide range of powers such as maintenance of records of village rights, deciding disputes, granting lands, maintaining the local irrigation-works, founding and maintaining hospitals and supervising the charitable endowments. They controlled a number of taxes which they could assign or remit at their pleasure. They had their own staff of officials, such as the *madhyastha* who took down the proceedings of the assembly without sharing in its deliberations.⁶

Fragmentary and imperfect as are the records mentioned above, they undoubtedly point to a marked development of municipal institutions, and still more, of self-governing village assemblies in different parts of the country during the period of the Imperial Guptas and their successors. It is, however, evident that the facts do not warrant the rash generalisation about a conscious extension of self-government 'from the top through all grades and strata of society down to the lowest classes in the villages', so as to make 'every village' a self-governing unit, and the whole country 'a vast rural democracy'. Nor do they support the equally bold case for a planned extension of administrative decentralisation so

⁶ Refs. to town and village administration in Gupta period:—(a, b, c, d) Damodarpur (North Bengal) copper-plates, dated $\frac{124 \text{ G.E.}}{443-444 \text{ A.D.}}$ and

$\frac{129 \text{ G.E.}}{449-50 \text{ A.D.}}$, and those of the time of

the Gupta Emperor Budhagupta, (date and year lost), and of the time of the Gupta Emperor Bhānu (?)—gupta,

$\frac{214 \text{ G.E.}}{533-34 \text{ A.D.}}$, *Ep. Ind.* XV no. 7

(a district officer under different titles carrying on the administration of the district town, *adhishthānādhiparāṇa*, with a guild-president, the leading merchant, the leading banker and the leading scribe at the top); (e) *Nalanda and its Epigraphic Material* by Hirānanda Sastri, pp. 45-48 (sealings of *grāma-janapadas* with the variants *grāmiya-janapadas* and *grāmakiya janapādas*); (f) *CII* III. pp. 31-32 (ref. to *pañchakulika*). The refs. in (a) to (e) have been explained fully in the light of a similar description in the *Mṛchchhakaṭika* drama by the present writer in his work *A History of Hindu Revenue System*, pp. 202-4. The most important refs. to representative town councils (or assemblies) and self-governing village assemblies in Northern India in the post-Gupta period are the following:—(a) Lakshmeswar (Dharwar district) pillar inscr. of the year A.D. 725 belonging to the Crown Prince

Vikramāditya of the Western Chālukya dynasty of Vātāpi, *Ep. Ind.* XIV, pp. 190-91 (a charter '*āchāravyavasthā*' granted by Vikramāditya, to the *mahājanas* 'chief householders', the *nagaras* 'burgesses' and the 18 *prakṛitis* 'classes of population of the city'; (b) Vaillabhaṭṭasvāmin (Gwalior) temple inscr. of the year A.D. 876 belonging to the time of Mihira Bhoja of the Gurjara-Pratihāra dynasty of Kanauj, *Ep. Ind.* I, p. 26 no. II (while a *śreshthi* and the *sārthavāha* and other members of the municipal board (*vāra*) were administering the city, the whole town made a religious endowment of some lands which were its own property); (c) Siyadoni inscr. of A.D. 904, *Ep. Ind.* I, p. 21 (gift of a field by a whole town). For the latest description of self-governing village assemblies under the Imperial Cholas, vide T.V. Mahalingam, *South Indian Polity*, pp. 341-72. For earlier accounts, vide K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *Studies in Cola History and Administration*, pp. 73-176 and *The Colas*, Vol. II, Part I, pp. 277-312. The system of town and village administration during the period from c. 200 B.C. to A.D. 1300 is noticed by the present writer in the work *A Comprehensive History of India* (Ch. VII) as well as in successive volumes of the *History and Culture of the Indian People*, namely, Vol. III Ch. XVI, Vol. IV Ch. X, and Vol. V Ch. XIII.

as to invest the Ancient Indian town and village councils with greater powers than those enjoyed by similar bodies elsewhere. It is not even possible for want of sufficient evidence to agree with the view that 'all classes and interests were represented on the town-committees' which 'were a common feature of Ancient Indian administration'. We have, lastly, to mention that in the absence of direct evidence of the organised resistance of the local bodies against royal tyranny and misrule, they cannot be regarded as 'the most effective and practical checks upon the king's powers'.⁷

III. *Did the Smṛiti rules relating to the duties of the king (rājadharmā) and the nature of his government along with the similar ideas and principles in the technical works on polity and the works of general literature signify 'constitutional laws' governing the relation between the king and the people in the Ancient Indian State?* The Smṛiti rules and principles relating to the obligation of the temporal ruler towards his subjects partook of the nature of solemn injunctions imposed upon the king by the sacred canon as part and parcel of a comprehensive scheme of duties of the constituent units of the social system, and they were supported as such by the highest moral and spiritual sanctions. Although from the nature of the case the similar rules and principles of the *Arthaśāstra-Nītiśāstra* tradition were lacking in such high authority, they could not but carry great weight as reflecting the judgment of the great masters of the science of polity. And yet it must be admitted that the Smṛiti-Arthaśāstra rules and principles fall short of what have been called by some of the scholars named above 'the constitutional laws' of the country.⁸ It has been shown by a recent Western authority on constitutional government⁹ that the two essential requirements of constitutionalism are government according to law, and popular consent with the accompanying right of free discussion of public policy. Applying

⁷ The attempt of some recent writers (Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerjee in *Chandragupta Maurya and his Times*, 2nd ed. p. 48, and Dr. T.V. Mahalingam in *South Indian Polity*, p. 333) to trace back through a gap of a thousand years or more a connexion between the Ancient Indian village-assemblies and their counter-parts in the early period of British rule which were so much praised by Sir Charles Metcalfe in an oft-quoted extract, is opposed to all canons of historical criticism, and the argument based thereon must be dismissed as irrelevant.

⁸ Compare Jayaswal's *Hindu Polity* for frequent refs. to 'the laws and principles' in the Ancient Indian constitution, and note the significance of its sub-title *A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times*. Similar refs.

are found less often in Dr. Altekar's work *State and Government in Ancient India*.

⁹ Namely, by Hugh McDowell Clokie in his work *The Origin and Nature of Constitutional Government*. 'It is a regime', we are here told (ibid pp. 99-101) 'in which, firstly, the law of the land may be known to all, applied equally to all under circumstances and procedure protecting the rights of all parties; and in which, secondly, the consent of the governed is not merely assumed, but is directly sought by free electoral machinery, and the policy of administration and legislation is discussed with the interests involved. Constitutionalism is thus more than government according to law. There must be added to legality as a second requisite, popular consent.'

this criticism to the Indian example we freely concede the general principle that it is against all canons of historical criticism to judge ancient ideas and institutions altogether by modern standards. But at the same time we have to mention that from the standpoint of the impartial historian the old Indian scheme of duties and obligations of the temporal ruler suffers from two fundamental defects. In the first place it claims to lay down the law or at least the proper line of conduct for the king's guidance irrespectively of the conditions of place and time. What it thus gained in extent was lost in the force of its practical application. In any case it is not possible to think of the *Smṛiti-Arthaśāstra* writers as laying down the organic law of a particular State or group of States for any time of the ancient period of our history. In the second place we miss in the Indian scheme any provision for a constitutional machinery to enforce its observance by the king. The attempts made in some quarters in recent times to discover such a machinery in the council of ministers, or in the council of learned men (*parishad*) charged in the *Smṛitis* with deciding disputed questions of law, or in a supposed 'Realm Assembly and Assembly of the Capital' (*paura-jānapada*), must be pronounced to be unsuccessful.¹⁰ The most convincing proof of the ineffectiveness of the *Smṛiti-Arthaśāstra* restraints on the ruler's authority in actual practice is furnished by the objective pictures of the misrule of kings which lie scattered throughout our ancient literature. These are found, for instance, in the wonderfully realistic descriptions of contemporary life in the *Jātakas* and in the detailed narrative of Kalhaṇa, the historian of Ancient Kashmir, not to speak of the proverbial references in Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jaina works to the evil nature of kings. Even the systematic lists of the king's vices in the *Smṛiti* and *Arthaśāstra* works tell their own tale of the grim reality of royal tyranny in ancient times.

It follows from the above that the rules and principles of the *Arthaśāstra-Smṛiti* tradition, however authoritative they might be otherwise, cannot be strictly expressed in terms of 'constitutional laws', nor can its authors be correctly characterised as 'constitutional writers'. It remains to discuss the significance of a few of these principles which have been made much of by some of our recent writers. First, as regards the principle of the supremacy of law, it has to be remembered that the *dharma* of the Brahmanical *Smṛitis* has reference primarily and above

¹⁰ On the functions of the king's ministers in the Ancient Indian polity, vide Chap. XII below. The conception of the *parishad* of the *Smṛitis* as a constitutional check on the king's powers (Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerjee, *op.cit.* p. 79) is disproved by the fact that unlike a permanent and regularly constituted body with well-defined powers, it was a fortuitous gathering with no fixed constitution or powers

of initiative and with little sanction. The analogy of councils of learned Brāhmanas in the seventeenth-century Maratha State under Sivaji and his son (Kane, *History*, Vol. II Part I, s.v. *parisad*) again lends no support to the above view. For the latest statement of the case against Jayaswal's theory of the *paurajānapada* assembly, vide Altekar, *op. cit.* pp. 136-46.

all to the law of the units of the social system. As the concept of the king's *dharma* was from the beginning sufficiently elastic to comprise the rules of his internal and foreign administration, it became easy enough for the later *Smṛiti* writers to incorporate into their system such *Arthasāstra* ideas as those investing the king's edict with the force of law and awarding the king's decrees the authority of overriding other processes of judicial decision. In the system of the authoritative thinkers of the *Mahābhārata* it became similarly possible for the principle of expediency (concretely expressed as the exigencies of the State) to be put forward as the sole criterion of royal policy in a political crisis. As for the views that the king was 'a servant of the State' (or of 'the people'), that kingship was 'a trust' and so forth, they rest upon far-fetched interpretations of isolated texts, while they ignore the repeated insistence of our ancient authors upon the principle of the king's authority matching that of his obligations towards his subjects. The further statements that the king's divinity was mainly based on his functional resemblance with the deities, that the king was bound by his coronation oath, that he had no authority over his subjects other than criminals, that militarism was completely alien to Hindu politics and so forth, involve one-sided judgments based upon the evidence of one set of texts to the complete exclusion of other passages which are at least equally authoritative.¹¹ Lastly, it may be mentioned that the *Smṛiti* texts, while investing the customs of various groups with the force of law and even in some cases giving their representatives the right of declaring those customs, do not certainly authorise them 'to legislate for themselves'.¹²

IV. *Does the history of later development of the Ancient Indian polity disclose the failure of our ancient thinkers to realise in actual practice their high conceptions and ideals of kingship, or else a drift towards unchecked bureaucracy or autocracy in place of the balanced constitution of earlier times, and, if so, what were the causes thereof?* We may admit at the outset what is indeed a historical truism that the post-Vedic times failed to develop constitutional checks and limitations, properly so called, on the authority of the ruler. It is, however, difficult to agree with the view that this was mainly due to the growing size of the States which made it impossible to revive the Popular Assemblies after the old Vedic pattern. Not to speak of the continuance of small States in the post-Vedic as in the earlier times, it has to be admitted that the disappearance of the Vedic assemblies was itself the symptom of the strong historical forces tending towards concentration of all governmental authority in

¹¹ The above principles are discussed fully by the present writer through the Chaps. III—XXII comprised in parts III—VI of his work *A History of Indian Political Ideas*.

¹² For criticism to an oft-stated view (Radha Kumud Mookerjee, *Local Government in Ancient India*, p. 124; R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in*

Ancient India p. 24; Beni Prasad, *The State in Ancient India*, pp. 165-6) that the territorial and socio-economic groups were invested in the *Smṛitis* with the right of legislation, vide also the present writer's paper, *The legal and political status of trades and crafts in the early Smṛitis (Siddha-Bhārati, Part II, pp. 248-50)*.

single or select hands. From this standpoint it is particularly instructive to compare the history of the Mediaeval Assemblies of Estates in the countries of Feudal Europe. These Assemblies came into existence between the twelfth and the fourteenth century, but they in course of time disappeared from various causes everywhere except in England. As regards the other view of the general tendency of the States in the Gupta and subsequent periods to pass from a balanced constitution to an unchecked bureaucracy or autocracy, it is contradicted by the author's own references. Such are, firstly, the text of the *Śukranīti* 'one of the latest political treatises written in ancient times' which (we are told) gives free expression to 'the old ideals of popular government'; secondly, the references in some of the Gupta inscriptions to 'a board of Advisers' for the district administration which consisted of four members representing the various interests; thirdly and lastly, the existence in the Chola administration (which was 'a type of the prevalent system') of assemblies of village-unions which 'exercised an almost sovereign authority in all departments of the rural administration' subject to official supervision. The evil of an unchecked bureaucracy or autocracy is vouched for by references in the historical and general literature from early times. This is proved by the repeated references to the rapacity and tyranny of officials in the factual description of Kalhaṇa and the satirical pictures of Kshemendra, as well as in the admonitions to kings in the works on Sacred Law and Polity and the equally frequent stories of wicked kings in our general literature. But there is no reason to suppose that the evil was made worse in the Gupta and later times. Assuming the author's view quoted above to be correct, the arguments by which it is sought to be supported are not free from objection. Firstly, 'the coalition between the priestly and the royal powers,' such as it was, was not a new phenomenon following from the triumph of Brahmanism over 'the heterodox sects' (meaning in this context only the Buddhists, but not the Jainas). It is reflected in the *Smṛiti* doctrine of the two powers which may be traced back to the later Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*. The author, again, has failed to quote a single instance of a king in the Gupta or post-Gupta period protecting the Brahmanical hierarchy 'if necessary even by force', and the *Brāhmaṇas* in return exaggerating the royal power at the sacrifice of the popular sentiment. The exceptional or nearly exceptional instance of Viṣṇuwardhana, the Hoysala king of Mysore, persecuting the Jainas after his conversion by the well-known sage Rāmānuja may be offset by the example of King Kumārapāla of the Chaulukya dynasty of Gujarat displaying his newly awakened zeal in favour of Jainism after his conversion by the equally celebrated teacher Hemachandra. In the detailed and authentic history of Kashmir we come across repeated instances of wholesale plunder of the temples and properties of *Brāhmaṇas* by tyrannical kings, and the equally frequent denunciations of such acts by the *Brāhmaṇa* chronicler Kalhaṇa. Secondly, the admitted failure of the people to act concertedly in political affairs,

instead of being an outgrowth of caste rigidity during the Gupta and post-Gupta times, was inherent in the ancient *Smṛiti* conception of the duties of the castes (*varṇadharmā*) which normally confined the functions of ruling and fighting to the Kshatriyas alone. In the *Śānti-parvan* section of the *Mahābhārata* which is admittedly a pre-Gupta work, the political theorist in his most thorough and exhaustive discussion of what may be called the civil rights of the subjects reserves concerted political action of all classes of people, significantly enough, for grave emergencies in the community. Such are those caused by danger to the lives and property of the Brāhmanas and the breakdown of the social order. Even in Europe which was free from the caste system after the Indian pattern, nationalism as a factor in politics was to come into the picture centuries later. Thirdly and lastly, the extensive development of the religious sects, so far from being a distinctive phenomenon of the Gupta and later periods, may be traced back at least to the sixth century B.C. which saw the rise of Jainism and Buddhism and many other obscure sects. The concentration of the best intellects of the country on religious and philosophical studies, which, however, was not the necessary consequence of 'the wide development of religious sects', may be traced back at least to the times of the *Upanishads*. And yet nobody has contended that Politics was left from the beginning to the mediocrities. In truth while the study of our ancient science of polity made the greatest progress in the centuries immediately before and after Christ, bold and original ideas were by no means wanting in the works of the following centuries. Of a balanced constitution in which the king, the bureaucracy and the people acted as checks upon one another, there is in the records of the pre-Gupta period hardly any trace.

Let us sum up, in conclusion, the results of the foregoing discussion. We have, *firstly*, to state that the recorded facts do not justify the dictum that the history of Ancient Indian polity was written in terms of arrested growth of primitive popular institutions, or of contented acceptance of despotic monarchy by the Brahmanical people to the complete neglect of the republican constitutions, or of deliberate destruction of the indigenous self-governing local assemblies by alien rulers. *Secondly*, though the political tradition in Ancient India at least from the fourth century after Christ has been exclusively monarchical, this has not been due to the inherent incapacity of the Brahmanical people for the republican type of government, but has been the consequence of a long train of historical circumstances for which parallels may be found in European history. The Brahmanical conception of the monarchical State, again, so far from being synonymous with autocracy, is based throughout upon a balance of two mutually complementary principles, namely, the authority and obligation of the temporal ruler. In the authoritative version of the *Śāntiparvan* section of the *Mahābhārata* this conception is consistent with the idea of resistance of the upper classes of society against the evil ruler, while it is not averse to the discussion of

the problem of republics with sympathy and understanding. *Thirdly*, though the literary records of the pre-Gupta period indicate a general tendency towards organisation of the local administration on strictly bureaucratic lines, the epigraphic evidence for the centuries thereafter points to the prevalence of town-councils with representatives of classes and interests in Northern and Western India as well as of village-assemblies with an elaborate popular constitution and with extensive powers of self-government in the South. There is, however, no case for such sweeping judgments on the historical *role* of the Ancient Indian local bodies as those suggesting a conscious extension of self-government from the top down to the lowest levels, or the planned decentralisation of governmental functions so as to invest the town and village councils and assemblies with powers unparalleled elsewhere, or the early acquisition by various social and economic groups of the power of legislation for themselves. *Fourthly*, the rules and principles of the *Arthaśāstra-Smṛiti* and allied tradition in restraint of the king's powers, so far from being mere 'admonitions of the text-book writers about the duties of the ideal ruler' or else the authors' expression of 'the highest possible ideals of the kingly order,' represented rules of the canon law, or else the considered judgments of the wisest exponents of the science of polity for the king's guidance in practical administration. Nevertheless they failed to reach the standard of constitutional laws with a recognised human authority for enforcing their observance by the ruler in normal times. This of course deprives the theory of some of our recent scholars regarding the limited or constitutional character of Ancient Indian monarchies of much of its force. *Fifthly and lastly*, it is true that the post-Vedic period did not witness the development of constitutional checks and limitations upon the king's powers such as were represented earlier by the Vedic Popular Assemblies. The failure to revive these Assemblies in the later period, however, was not the consequence of the increased size of the States, but was itself the outward expression of the prevailing tendency towards concentration of political authority in selected hands. On the other hand the theory of an abrupt transition in the Gupta and later periods from a balanced constitution to an unchecked bureaucracy or autocracy is not supported by any evidence, while the arguments advanced in favour of this view fail to carry conviction.¹³

¹³ Dr. K. P. Jayaswal's *Hindu Polity* is quoted in its third ed. (Bangalore 1955), Dr A. S. Altekar's *State and Government in Ancient India* in its second ed. (Banaras 1955), Dr. R.C.

Majumdar's *Corporate Life in Ancient India* in its 2nd ed. (Calcutta 1922), and Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerjee's *Local Government in Ancient India* in its 2nd ed. (Oxford 1920).

CHAPTER IX

THE VEDIC CEREMONIES OF ROYAL AND IMPERIAL CONSECRATION AND THEIR POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

INTRODUCTORY

Among the immense mass of ceremonies comprised in the Vedic sacrificial ritual, four are singled out in several ritualistic (*Śrautasūtra*) texts as 'the Kshatriya's' or 'the king's' sacrifices. These are the *Rājasūya*, the *Aśvamedha*, the *Purushamedha* and *Sarvamedha*. Of these the *Purushamedha* ('human sacrifice') and still more the *Sarvamedha* ('all-sacrifice'), it has been shown, were more or less of the nature of later priestly inventions modelled on the genuine *Śrauta* sacrifices. As regards the *Aśvamedha* which *ŚB* (XIII 2.2.1) significantly calls 'the King of sacrifices', its performance necessarily lay within the competence of a ruler of undisputed supremacy. The *Rājasūya* by contrast is emphatically declared to be the consecration ceremony for kings, while its ritual alone is charged with the fullest political and constitutional significance. In the present chapter accordingly we shall mainly utilise the *Rājasūya* texts of the Vedic ritual-literature, although for the purpose of completing our survey we shall also notice the much slighter data relating to similar Vedic sacrifices.¹

¹ For the four 'Kshatriya' otherwise called 'Kingly' sacrifices vide *Vaitāna Sūtra* XXXVIII 15 with which Caland (*Das Vaitānasūtra des Atharvaveda*, p. 113) compares *Baudh. Karmāntasūtra* I 11 (*atha rājayajñā rājasūyo' śvamedhah purushamedhah sarvamedhah*) and Eggeling (*SBE* Vol XLIV *Introd.* p. XVII) mentions *Mbh.* XIV 48 where Vyāsa specially recommends performance of above four sacrifices by King Yudhishthira. On the significance of *Purushamedha* and *Sarvamedha* vide Eggeling, *op. cit.*, pp. XLIV-XLV and Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, pp. 347-48. Texts explaining significance of *Aśvamedha* and *Rājasūya*:—(a) *TB* III 8.9.4 (*parā ha vā esha sichyate yo'balō' śvamedhena yajate*); (b) *VSS* III 3.1.1 (*rājño rājasūyah*); (c) *KSS* XV 1 (*rājño rājasūyo' nishthino vājapeyena*, (d) *LSS* IX 1) (*rājā rājasūyena yajeta*) on which Agnisvāmin comments *pṛatābhisheko kshatriyo rājasūyena yajeta*; (e) *Mān. ŚS* cited in Deva's

commentary on *KSS* XVI 1.5 (*rājā rājyakāmo rājasūyena yajeta*); (f) *Vaitāna Sūtra* XLIII 40 (quoted by Weber, *Über den Rājasūya* p. 8n). In *TS* V 6.2.1, *TB* II II 7.6.1, *ŚB* V 4.3.2 and 21 *Rājasūya* is called *Varuṇasaya* meaning according to Sāyana the consecration to the universal sway exercised by Varuṇa. *Sān. ŚS* XV 12.1-5 states how Varuṇa desiring to attain supremacy performed the *Rājasūya* and directs one desiring the same to perform the same ceremony. When Jayaswal (*HP* p. 192) mentions *Rājasūya*, *Vājapeya* and *Sarvamedha* as the three *Śrauta* ceremonies for consecration of "the heads of society," he ignores the references above quoted to *Aśvamedha* and *Purushamedha*, while unnecessarily including *Vājapeya* which according to his own admission was originally not of a political nature, but was afterwards adopted for "royal and religious consecrations."

A. The Rājasūya

The fullest account of the *Rājasūya* has been handed down to us in a number of *Saṁhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas* as well as *Srautasūtras* of the *Yajus* school. From a statement in one of these texts it appears that the *Rājasūya* ceremony was of several varieties. We propose to consider here the significance of the ritual described so completely in the *Yajus* texts, while making occasional references to the parallel texts of other schools.²

Sacrificer's status before consecration

In proceeding to analyse the constitutional principles underlying the *Rājasūya*, we are confronted at the outset with the question of the sacrificer's status before consecration. Holding that 'the King-elect' (*sic*) is designated as 'he' before the sprinkling ceremony and only called 'King' thereafter, Dr. Jayaswal (*Hindu Polity* p. 193) concludes that "he becomes invested with the royal office and powers" only after the completion of the ceremony and is "an ordinary citizen" before that time. If this were so, the consecration of the King would be an act of profound constitutional importance for the reason of investing a private citizen with the royal status. Now although it is a fact that the sacrificer is presented to the assembled folk as King only after his consecration, the authoritative texts of the *Yajus* as well as other schools leave us in no doubt that the performer of the *Rājasūya* already has a ruler's status.³

Ratna-havīṁshi

Of the complex of rites included in the *Rājasūya* we have first to mention the unique ceremony of the *ratna-havīṁshi* ("Jewel-offerings"), occurring among the preliminaries of the sacrifice. This consists in the King's making offerings to the appropriate deities on successive days at the houses of several specific persons. The lists of these persons according to the different texts are given below.

TS 1.8.9. 1ff	MS 11.6.5; iv. 3.8.	KS xv. 4.	ŚB v. 3. 1ff.	TB 1.7.3
1. <i>Brahman</i>	1. <i>Brahman</i>	Same as MS.	1. <i>Senānī</i>	1. <i>Brahman</i>
2. <i>Rājanya</i>	2. <i>Rājanya</i>	with omission of	2. <i>Purohita</i>	2. <i>Rājanya</i>
3. <i>Mahishī</i> (*Chief Queen')	3. <i>Mahishī</i>	<i>Takshan</i> and <i>Rathakāra</i> and	3. <i>Mahish</i>	3. <i>Mahishī</i>

² *Rājasūya* is described after the White *Yajus* ritual in *VS* (IX 35—X 34), *ŚB* (V 2, 2—5.5) *KSS* (XV 1-10), and after the Black *Yajus* ritual in *KS* (XV 1-10), *MS* (II 6. 1-13, IV 3, 1-4; 10) (*khilakāṇḍa*), *TS* (I 8. 1-21), *TB* (I 6. 1-8; 10) and *Ap. ŚS* (XVIII). For refs. to *Rājasūya* after the ritual texts of other schools vide *BSS* XII, *ĀSS* IX 3-4, *ŚSSS* XV 13-27 (schools

of *Rv*), *PB* XVIII 8-11 and *LSS* IX 1-3 (schools of *Sāmaveda*), and finally, *Vaitāna Sūtra* XXXVI 1-13 (school of *Av.*). On the varieties of *Rājasūya* vide *ĀSS.*, *uttarashaṭka* III 3 introducing and concluding its account of the *Rājasūya* with the words *atha rāja-sūyāḥ* and *iti rājasūyāḥ* respectively.

³ On the royal status of the *Rājasūya* sacrificer vide *fn.* 1 above.

TS 1.8.9. 1ff	MS 11.6.5; iv. 3.8.	KS xv. 4.	ŚB v. 3. 1ff.	TB 1.7.3
4. <i>Parivṛiktī</i> (‘neglected wife’)	4. <i>Parivṛiktī</i>	substitution of <i>Govyacha</i> (with variant readings) for <i>Govikarta</i>	4. <i>Sūta</i>	4. <i>Vāvāta</i>
5. <i>Senānī</i> (leader of the host)	5. <i>Senānī</i>		5. <i>Grāmaṇī</i>	5. <i>Parivṛiktī</i>
6. <i>Sūta</i> (‘minstrel’)	6. <i>Samgrahitri</i>		6. <i>Kṣhatṛi</i>	6. <i>Senānī</i>
7. <i>Grāmaṇī</i> (‘village head- man’)	7. <i>Kṣhatṛi</i>		7. <i>Samgrahitri</i>	7. <i>Sūta</i>
8. <i>Kṣhatṛi</i> (‘carver’)	8. <i>Sūta</i>		8. <i>Bhāgadugha</i>	8. <i>Grāmaṇī</i>
9. <i>Samgrahitri</i> (‘charioteer’)	9. <i>Vaiśyagrā maṇī</i>		9. <i>Akshāvāpa</i>	9. <i>Kṣhatṛi</i>
10. <i>Bhāgadugha</i> (‘divider’)	10. <i>Bhāgadugha</i>		10. <i>Gonikartana</i>	10. <i>Samgrahitri</i>
11. <i>Akshāvāpa</i> (‘thrower of the dice’)	11,12 <i>Takshan</i> (‘carpenter’) & <i>Rathakāra</i> (‘chariotmaker’) 13 & 14 <i>Akshā vāpa</i> & <i>Govikarta</i> (‘hunter’)		11. <i>Pālāgala</i> (‘courier’)	11. <i>Akshāvāpa</i>
				12. <i>Bhāga- dugha</i>

In the above lists it will be seen that the *Brahman* priest (*purohita* in *ŚB*), the Chief Queen, and the officers severally called *senānī*, *sūta*, *grāmaṇī*, *kṣhatṛi*, *saṃgrahitri*, *bhāgadugha* and *akshāvāpa* are common to all. To this central group, as it may be called, are added the *rājanya* and the *parivṛiktī* according to all Black *Yajus* texts, while *MS* and *KS* further add the *govyacha* (or *govikarta*) and *TB* the *vāvāta*, the *MS* making two yet further additions in the shape of the *takshan* and the *rathakāra*. On the other hand *ŚB*, while substituting the sacrificer himself for the *rājanya*, adds the *gonikartana* and the *pālāgala*. In the above we may conveniently arrange the names under several heads: firstly, the group *brahman-purohita*, then the Chief Queen (and other Queens), and finally, the group of officers of the royal court and household down to the meanest ones.

What, then, is the constitutional significance of the above ceremony? According to Jayaswal (*Hindu Polity* pp. 197, 275) it involves the sacrificer’s ‘worship’ of the personages concerned, including not only the King’s wives and the ministers, but also ‘the headman of the village corporation’ and ‘the conquered helot.’ But in fact the worship is offered by the sacrificer to the appropriate deities in each case. The significance of the ceremony is explained in other texts in the same context. *MS* iv. 3. 8, in introducing its description, applies to *ratnins* the epithet ‘limbs of the ruling power,’ and observes that the kingdom of one whose *ratnins* are full of strength and vigour becomes strong and vigorous. More emphatic is the testimony of *TB* 1. 7.3.1. which states that the *ratnins* are ‘the givers’ as well as ‘the takers’ of the kingdom, and as such they bestow the kingdom upon the sacrificer. In thorough accord with the above is the explanation of *ŚB* (v. 3. 1. 1-12) mentioned in connection with each of the

ratnins, viz. that he (or she) assuredly is one of the King's jewels (*ratnas*), and that it is for him (or her) that he is thereby consecrated, and him (or her) he makes his own faithful follower. In the above the group of persons aforesaid, viz. the priest, the queen, the officials and the class (or caste) representatives, are endowed with such high constitutional status as to deserve the epithets 'limbs of the ruling power' and 'bestowers of the kingdom'. The object of the ceremony, accordingly, is to win for the King the allegiance of these important personages. On the strength of this description of a mere sacrificial routine and in the absence of more concrete data, it would of course be improper to draw any definite conclusions about the actual constitutional powers exercised throughout this period by the above persons in the Vedic State. We may, however, point out how another *Brāhmaṇa* passage, quite independently of the sacrificial formula, corroborates the high constitutional position enjoyed at this period by some of the *ratnins*. We refer to *PB* xix, 1. 4 giving a list of eight *vīras* ('persons of distinction') among whom, we are told, the King is consecrated, and who sustain the kingdom. This list consists of the King's brother, the King's son, the *purohita*, the Chief Queen, the *sūta*, the *grāmaṇī*, the *kshatṛi* and the *saṃgrahīṭṛi* of whom all but the first two are found also in the *ratnin* lists.

Coming to individual names, we find that the *brahman* priest occupies the first place in all the *ratnin* lists with the exception of *ŚB* where the *purohita* (his nearest equivalent) is given the second position. Of the dominant position occupied by this last-named functionary, we have evidence in other Vedic texts, notably in *AB* VIII 24-28, where in course of a long eulogy of the *purohita's* office he is called *rāshtragopa* ('protector of the kingdom'). It is, however, noticeable that in the *ŚB* list the *purohita* comes after the *senānī*, just as in the *PB* list of *vīras* mentioned above he comes after the king's brother and son. It therefore follows that while the majority of priestly authorities agree in assigning the highest position in the Vedic State to the representative of the holy power, others give this place to purely secular personages. The Vedic State, then, even according to the views of the priestly authors themselves, was not uniformly dominated by the spiritual power.

We now come to the Chief Queen and other queens of lesser rank. Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 194) explains their inclusion in the *ratnin* lists on 'the principle of completing the spiritual self of the King-elect', which is expressed in the *ŚB* formula of the sacrificer's mounting the post along with his wife at the *Vājapeya*. In this view of the case the Queen's participation in the *Rājasūya* would be entirely assimilated to that of the wife at any other *Śrauta* sacrifice. Not only, however, is the above description of the *ratnins* decisive about the character of the ceremony as a State function, but *MS* (iv. 3. 8), explaining the offering at the houses of the *Mahishī* and the *Parivṛiktī*, definitely says that he thereby makes them an object of subsistence among the subjects. Moreover the *vīras* of *PB*, among whom the Chief Queen is included, are expressly described as

sustaining the kingdom. We have, therefore, no other choice than to accept the position that the Chief Queen and other queens occupied a high official status in the Vedic State. It will be noticed that in all the lists quoted above the Chief Queen comes immediately after the *brahman* priest and the *rājanya* (in *ŚB* after the *senāni*, the *purohita* and the sacrificer), while the queens of lesser rank come immediately thereafter.

Coming to the *rājanya* (prince or noble) who takes the second place in all the Black *Yajus* texts and the *takshan* (carpenter) and the *rathakāra* (chariot-maker) who are placed almost at the end in the *MS* list, we have to state that they evidently stand for representatives of the corresponding classes (or castes). We may trace the political importance of these classes with some certainty to earlier times. In *AV* III. 5. 6-7 skilled chariot-makers and smiths, *rājans* and *rājakṛts*, *sūtas* and *grāmaṇīs* are expressly specified among the persons whom a King at his consecration desires to make his dependants (*upasti*). The *rājans* and *rājakṛts* of this passage are probably represented by the single *rājanya* of the *ratnin* lists, while the chariot-makers and the smiths evidently have their representatives in the individual *takshan* and *rathakāra* in the same lists. While the high constitutional position of the *rājanya* does not require any explanation, that of the two artisan classes is an index of the status assigned to industry in the Vedic State. We may probably detect in the substitution (which indeed is almost meaningless in the present context) of the sacrificer for the *rājanya* in the *ŚB* list and inclusion of the *takshan* and the *rathakāra* in *MS*, a certain amount of priestly manipulation so as to limit in the one place and to extend in the other the principle of political representation of the social classes.

We come now to the last group of *ratnins* consisting of specific officers of the royal court and household. As for the *senāni* (commander-in-chief) it will be observed that with the single exception of *ŚB* which places him at the head of the list, all other texts agree in assigning him a position below the *Brahman*, the *Rājanya* and the Queen (or queens). With this we may compare the omission (strange as it may seem) of the *senāni* from the list of eight *vīras* who, according to the *PB* text quoted above, sustain the kingdom, and also from the group of persons to whom the sacrificial sword is successively passed round at a *Rājasūya* ritual to be described below. Clearly, therefore, in the eyes of these authors the military branch of the administration held a subordinate place in comparison with the civil. The Vedic State, according to this view, was the reverse of a *Kriegstaat*. In the next place, it has to be mentioned that the *sūta* and the *grāmaṇi* along with the *kshattri* are known to the *Rigveda* and the *Atharvaveda*, unlike the *saṃgrahītri* and the *bhāgadugha* who are mentioned for the first time in the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*. That the *sūtas* and *grāmaṇīs* occupied a distinctive position in the State from early times is proved by the *AV* text quoted above, where they are included among the persons whom the newly consecrated King expressly desires to be made subject to him. In the reference to the individual

sūta, *grāmaṇī* and other officers of the *ratnin* list as also in the under-mentioned ceremony of the passing round of the sacrificial sword, we may probably detect a fresh application of the principle of representation in the Vedic polity.⁴

Devasū-havīmshi

The central ceremony of the *Rājasūya*, namely, that of the besprinkling of the sacred waters (*abhishechaniya*) begins with offerings to a number of deities called *Devasūs* ('Divine Quickeners', Eggeling; 'Gods that instigate the Gods', Keith), and it ends with a game of dice. In the formula accompanying the *Devasū-havīmshi* (*devasū* oblations), which is common to both the White and the Black *Yajus* schools, the gods Savitṛi, Agni, Soma, Rudra, Bṛihaspati, Indra, Varuṇa and the like, dignified with appropriate epithets, are invoked to quicken the sacrificer for various kinds of authority. In the Black *Yajus* texts the sacrificer immediately follows with the words:—

'This kingdom (*rājya*) hath verily been conferred'.⁵

Explaining the above formula *ŚB* V 3.3.6 and 9 states that thereby Indra Jyeshṭha ('Indra the most excellent', Eggeling) leads him to *jyaishṭhya* ('lordship' or 'eminence') and Varuṇa Dharmapati ('lord of the law', Eggeling; 'lord of right', Keith) makes him *dharmapati*. That truly is *paramatā* ('supreme state'), the *ŚB* text continues, where one is *dharmapati*, for whoever attains to *paramatā* to him they come in matters of *dharma*. In the above it will be noticed that the White *Yajus* text derives two specific forms or aspects of royal authority, namely, 'lordship' and 'the supreme state' from divine favour. The Black *Yajus*

⁴ Quotations of texts relating to *ratnins* referred to above:—(a) *kshatrasya vā etānyaṅgāni yasya vā etāni tejasvini bhavanti tad-rāshṭram tejasvī bhavati* (*MS* IV 3.8); (b) *ete vai rāshṭrasya pradātāraḥ ete pādātāraḥ/ ya eva rāshṭrasya pradātāraḥ ye pādātāraḥ te evāsmāi rāshṭram prayachchhanti/rāshṭrameva bhavati* (*TB* I 7. 3. 1); (c) *imāmevānam prajābhya upajivānyam karoti* (*MS* IV 3.8). Jayaswal's sweeping statement (*op. cit.*, p. 196) identifying the *ratnins* with 'high functionaries of the State selected on the principle of class and caste representation' is open to objection on the following grounds. Firstly, for obvious reasons the statement cannot apply to the two groups, namely, the *brahman-purohita*, and the Chief Queen as well as other queens. Secondly, while the *rājanya*, the *takshan*, the *rathakāra* etc. in the lists may be plausibly held (as stated below) to be representatives of their

corresponding classes and castes, they are shown by their very titles to be members of the royal court and household. Indeed the development of a State administration properly so called in contrast with an *ensemble* of the king's court and household belongs essentially to the post-Vedic period. Thirdly, the inclusion of the *Sūdra* in the lists (assuming that the *akshāvāpa* etc. belonged to this caste) does not, as Jayaswal thinks (*op. cit.*, p. 197), signify 'a great constitutional change' involving 'the express recognition of the *Sūdra* as a part of society'. For already in *Av.* XIX 32. 8 and 62 the wish is expressed to be dear to the *Sūdra* as well as the *Ārya*.

⁵ Refs. to formula of *Devasū* oblations (after both White and Black *Yajus* rituals):—*VS* IX 39-40, *SB* V 3. 3. 3-12, *TS* I 8. 10, *KS* XV 5-8, *MS* II 6. 6, *TB* I 7.4, *ApSS* XVIII 12. 1-10.

text more directly derives the kingdom itself from the same source. We find it therefore difficult to agree with the explanation of the foregoing formula given by Jayaswal in another context (*Hindu Polity*, p. 200) viz. that "the gods might give him virtues for national rule, but they could not give him kingship of the land". Elsewhere, however, as we shall presently see, the *Yajus Samhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* texts explaining a *Rājasūya* ritual imply the kingship to be derived from non-divine sources and invoke for it protection by the subjects.

In the passages (V 3, 3. 6 and 9) of *ŚB* just quoted Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 256) detects the deliberate formulation of a new theory of legal administration. "The sacred formula," he says, "only contemplates the protection of the law as a necessary duty of the king, but the commentator takes it in the sense that one of the chief features of a full-fledged State must be that the law is administered by the king or his officers. The old theory had been that the law of the community was administered by the community." It must, however, be remembered that the Vedic king's control over the administration of criminal justice may be traced back to the *RV* and *AV* passages mentioning spies (*spāśah*) of Varuṇa and other deities. Probably the *ŚB* passage belongs to the developed stage of the Vedic polity when the King's justice prevailed over all private jurisdictions.

We may next notice the significance of some other forms of authority with which the sacrificer is sought to be invested in the above-mentioned formula of 'Invocation of the Divine Quickeners'. In a number of parallel texts the priest prays that the sacrificer may be quickened for *amitram* ('freedom from foes') or *asapāman* ('freedom from a rival'), *jyaishthya* ('lordship') or *ādhipatyā* ('overlordship'), and *jānarājya* ('man-rule', Eggeing: 'rule over the people', Keith). If we take the last-named term to mean rule over the whole folk as distinguished from a single tribe, we may take it that Vedic monarchy during this period was held at its highest level to involve not only undisputed authority, but also the rule over a complex of tribes.

In the same invocation formula the king is referred to as 'the son (or descendant) of such a man and the son of such a woman' (*VS IX. 40*, *MS II. 6. 6.*), as 'the descendant of such a man' (*TS I. 8. 10*) and so forth. This illustrates one of the fundamental characteristics of the late Vedic State, namely the human origin of the king. The king is here described simply by the names of his parents, and not the slightest attempt is made on such a solemn occasion to trace back his ancestry to the gods. Of the significance of the royal sacrificers' identification with God Indra or else his description as the visible form of Prajāpati in a few *Brahmana* texts we shall speak later.

In the concluding stage of the *devasū* offerings the priest presents the sacrificer to the assembled folk with the words (*VS IX 40*) "This is your King, ye (people): Soma is the King of us Brāhmaṇas." The same formula is repeated with or without variant forms in *VS X 18*, *TS I 8. 10*,

KS XV 5-8, MS II 6.6. 27, TB I 7.4 at the besprinkling of the sacrificer and again with slight variants in TS I 8. 12. KS XV 7 MS II 6.9 at the preparation of the sacred waters, these two ceremonies forming part of the later *Rājasūya* ritual. In this unequivocal assertion of the Brāhmaṇa's independence of the earthly king we can probably trace the transference to the political sphere of those general ideas of social and religious pre-eminence of this class which are frequently met with in the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*. It is, however, characteristic of the weak organisation of the Brahmanical order and not less of its mentality that the only corollary drawn by ŚB (V 4.2.3.) from its explanation of the VS text quoted above is the claim of immunity of the Brāhmaṇa's property.⁶ This claim is supported by incidental references (XIII 6.2.1 18 and 7.1.13) quoted below from the same *Brāhmaṇa*, and it afterwards becomes a fundamental axiom of public finance in the *Smṛiti-Arthaśāstra* State.

A very different interpretation of the above formula is given by Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 205). Translating the VS passage (IX 40) quoted above in a different way,

"This man, oh, ye people, is your king: he is Soma, the king of us Brāhmaṇas",

he observes, "Here the king is consecrated as king of the whole people including the Brahmins, and the priest expresses this by calling him Soma." Jayaswal's arguments, however, do not carry conviction. He rejects the interpretation of ŚB V 4.2.3. referred to above on the ground that it is "inconsistent with the existence of the indicative 'this' (*esha*) in the text, the naming of the people or nation, and the homage when the Brahmin resigns his privilege in the person of the king" (in VS X 28 to be quoted below). Now the syntax of the formula according to all the schools implies a sharp antithesis (and not apposition) between the concepts of sovereignty of the people and that of the Brāhmaṇas. The naming of the people makes no difference, as they are similarly contrasted with the Brāhmaṇas. We have an indirect reference to the Brāhmaṇa's claim of independence in another ŚB text which explains the formula used at the *rathavimochanīya* ('unyoking of the chariot') ceremony of the *Rājasūya*.⁷ As for the VS passage (X 28) its evidence alone is not suffi-

⁶ The ŚB extract (V 4.2.3) is as follows:—"This man, O ye people, is your king, Soma is the king of us Brāhmaṇas! He thereby causes everything here to be food for him (the king); The Brāhmaṇa alone he excepts; therefore the Brāhmaṇa is not to be fed upon, for he has Soma for his king." With the above cf. ŚB XIII 6. 2. 18 and 7. 1. 13 stating that when the king gives all land to the priests, the gift does not cover the property of the Brāhmaṇa.

⁷ The text (S. B. V. 4.2) reads as follows: "Yasyai viśo rāja bhavetyesha vo'mi

rāja Somo' asmākam Brāhmaṇānām rājeti tadasmā idam sarvāmādyam karoti Brāhmaṇamevāpoddharati tasmād Brāhmaṇo nādyah". The above means the 5th *kaṇḍa* the 4th *adhyāya* and the 2nd *brāhmaṇa* in Samasrami's ed. Vol V. p. 271. For help in preparations of the roman transliteration of the Sanskrit text in this footnote as well as in footnotes 18 and 21 below the author is indebted to the kind assistance of Principal Gaurinath Sastri, M.A., Ph.D., of the Government Sanskrit College, Calcutta.

cient to invalidate the clear reference to the independence of the Brāhmaṇas in the above-quoted formula of all the *Yajus* schools.

Preparation of waters for the consecration

After the *Devasū* oblations, comes the ceremony of collection of waters of various kinds (significantly called 'bestowers of the kingdom') for the purpose of the King's consecration. Explaining the reference to the different kinds of water, *ŚB* (V. 3.4.5 ff.) says *inter alia* that the King is thereby made the lord as well as the offspring of the people. Again it says, "And so there is in his kingdom even one belonging to some other kingdom, and even that man from another kingdom he absorbs." Here in the first place we are introduced to the conception of the king's double relation to his people. This is based upon the two-fold principle of authority and of direct origin from the people. With the first and more characteristic principle we may match *ŚB* xi. 2.7.16 declaring that *Brahma* and *Kshatra* are established upon the *Viś*, while the second has its parallel in *ibid* xii. 7.3.8 stating that *Kshatra* is produced from out of the *Viś*. In the second place the reference to the absorption of men of some other kingdom probably hints at the practice, for which analogy is found in Anglo-Saxon history, of the King's drawing upon foreign residents for his band of retainers.

After the collection of the sacred waters the priest offers the *Pārtha* oblations (called after *Prithin Vainya* "the first consecrated of men") to twelve deities, namely, Agni, Indra, Varuṇa and so forth. *ŚB* v. 3.5.5-9, in the course of its explanation of the corresponding formula (*VS* x. 5), identifies *Bṛihaspati* and *Soma* with *brahma* and *kshatra* respectively, and it says that the priest thereby sprinkles (endows) the sacrificer with *brahma* and *kshatra* respectively. Here we have one of those numerous references to the dominating influence of the spiritual and temporal powers in the Vedic State, which are found in the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*.

After the *Pārtha* oblations just mentioned the sacrificer puts on various garments symbolising the development of an embryo till it reaches maturity. The priest then strings for him a bow, the symbol of his princely rank. Explaining the accompanying formula (*VS* x. 8), *ŚB*, v. 3.5.27 utters the dictum referred to elsewhere, namely that the sacrificer is Indra in a two-fold way, both as a *Kshatriya* and as a sacrificer. The same maxim is repeated in *ŚB* v. 4.3.4 & 7 explaining a formula (*VS* x. 21)—where indeed the King calls himself *Arjuna* (an epithet of Indra)—used for the sacrificer's taking down the chariot from the stand and mounting the same at a later stage of the sacrifice. The Vedic King, in other words, is identified with his divine prototype not merely through the characteristic doctrine of sacrifice in the *Brāhmaṇas*, but also by virtue of his caste with its implied divinely ordained function of ruling the people.

The above ceremony is followed by a series of formulas (the so-called *Āvid* formulas) announcing the King to Agni, Indra, Pūshan, Mitra, Varuṇa, Sky and Earth, Aditi. This formula is preceded in the White *Yajus* ritual by the announcement of the sacrificer to mortals. In the Black *Yajus* ritual it is followed by his announcement by name and parentage as well as by tribe (*viś*), and it ends with the formula mentioned elsewhere, namely that while the sacrificer is the King of the people concerned, Soma is the King of the Brāhmaṇas. Explaining this formula with reference to Agni and Indra, *ŚB* v. 3.5.32-33 identifies these deities with *brahma* and *kshātra* respectively, and it observes that thereby *brahma* and *kshātra* approve of his consecration, and approved by them he is consecrated. Here we have one more reference to the dominant influence of the two powers in the Vedic State, of which we have spoken above.

We have just observed that the Black *Yajus* texts following the *Āvid* formulas refer to the sacrificer by the name of his tribe (*viś*). This method of announcement is also adopted in the White *Yajus* formula relating to the concluding stage of the *Devasū* oblations, to which reference has been made above. It therefore follows that the Vedic State at this period was still in the tribal stage.⁸ We have, however, a striking variant of the above formula in *TS* 1.8.12 where we read that the King is notified 'in this folk (*viś*), in this kingdom (*rāshtra*)'. In another remarkable passage (*II*. 3) *TS* not only distinguishes between the tribal and territorial kingdoms, but treats the latter as the completion of the former. Here we are told that the king by partial performance of a rite attains the people (*viś*) but not the kingdom (*rāshtra*), while he attains both by its full performance. From the above it follows that some of the Vedic States of this period at any rate had already emerged from the tribal to the territorial stage.

Mounting of the Quarters

At the close of the above ceremony the King figuratively mounts the four quarters and the zenith to symbolise his assumption of universal sovereignty. In the accompanying formula which is common to both *Yajus* schools, the appropriate metres, chants, *stomas*, seasons ('deities' in the Black *Yajus* ritual) along with *Brahma*, *Kshātra*, *Viś*, and (instead of the *Śūdra*) dyads of objects (or attributes), are invoked successively to protect the sacrificer. These last are stated to be *phala* and *var-*

⁸ Formula preceding or following sacrificer's announcement:— *VS* X 9, *TS* I 8. 12, *KS* XV 7, *MS* II 6. 9, *TB* I 7. 6. 7, *Āp.* *ŚS* XVIII 12. 7. We quote below the last-mentioned text giving illustrations of the above:—*athainam ratnibhya āvedayatyasha vo Bharatā rājeti/ esha vaḥ Kuravo rājeti Kauravyam/ esha vaḥ Pañchāla rājeti pañchālam/*

esha vaḥ Kurupañchālā rājeti vā Kurupañchālam/ esha vo janatā rājetanyān rājñah/. The persistence of this tradition down to later times is indicated by *KSS* XV 4. 17 which prescribes adherence to the tribal name on the ground that no rule is laid down regarding the name of the kingdom.

chas ('fruit' and 'lustre') in *VS*, *'bala'* and *'varchas'* ('host' and 'lustre') in *TS*, *pushṭam* and *phalam* ('abundance' and 'fruit') in *MS*, *pushṭam* and *varchas* ('abundance' and 'lustre') in *KS*.⁹ Taking *phala* in the *VS* text to stand evidently for the *Sūdra* in contrast with *brahma*, *kshatra* and *viś*, Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, pp. 203-04 and 204n) traces in the above "a point of the greatest constitutional import" namely, that "the king is to be protected by the four estates of the realm". Now in the first place Jayaswal's interpretation of *phala* as *Sūdra* is unsupported by any evidence whatever. On the other hand the pairs 'fruit and lustre', 'abundance and fruit,' and the like (about which Jayaswal is significantly silent) evidently show that they belonged to the same category. In fact the king is repeatedly held in the *Yajus Samhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* texts to be invested with abundance, prosperity and the like by virtue of the sacrifice. Again, it is in complete accord with the spirit of these texts to exclude the *Sūdra* from all higher civil and religious rights. The ceremony, therefore, has the significance of symbolising the influence of the three higher castes alone upon the Vedic polity.

The besprinkling with the sacred waters

After the conclusion of the *Devasū* oblations the sacrificer is sprinkled with holy water by four distinct persons, as the authorities add with priestly pedantry, from as many different kinds of wooden vessels. In the White *Yajus* ritual these persons are:—

Adhvaryu (or purohita), sva (king's kinsman or brother), mitrya-rājanya (friendly Rājanya) and Vaiśya (*ŚB* V 3.5.11-14 and 4.2.2.).

In the Black *Yajus* ritual the persons mentioned are:—

Adhvaryu, Rājanya, Vaiśya and Janya (*TB* I 7.8.7);

Adhvaryu, Brahman (or Kshatriya), Vaiśya and Janyamitra (*ApŚS* XVIII 16.1.5);

Adhvaryu, Brahman (or Kshatriya), Vaiśya and Janyamitra (*HirŚS* quoted in Caland, *ApŚS*, tr., p. 145);

Brahman, Vaiśya, Bhrātrivya and Janya (*MānŚS* quoted in Caland, *loc. cit.*);

Brahman, Vaiśya, Bhrātrivya and Janyamitra (*MS* IV 4.2).

What is the constitutional significance of the above ceremony? According to Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 200) "the *Abhishecana* (anointing) is two-fold, the first part is the sprinkling of the waters by what may be described as different estates of the realm, and the second is the theological anointing on the head by the priest just before the king-elect ascends the throne (*āsandī*).” We are not concerned here with this 'second part' except simply to point out that in the White *Yajus* ritual (*VS* x. 25; *ŚB* v. 4.3.27) the ceremony consists in the priest's drawing down the sacrificer's two

⁹ Refs. to formula of king's mounting of the quarters:— *VS* X 10-14, *TS* I 8.

13, *KS* XV 7, *MS* II 6. 10.

arms to the dish of curds placed on a tiger-skin with the following formula:—

‘I draw you down, the arms of Indra, the doer of mighty deeds.’

In the Black *Yajus* ritual (TS 1.8.15) the ceremony consists in the sacrificer’s putting his hands in the clotted curds for the All-Gods with the formula:—

‘By the precept o Mitra and Varuṇa, the directors, I yoke thee with the yoking of the sacrifice.’

There is then no question of the priest’s anointing the sacrificer on the head in connection with the above ceremony.

As regards ‘the first part’ which alone corresponds to the besprinkling ceremony we have described above, Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 200) first remarks that in the White *Yajus* texts “the Śūdra is absent and the kinsman seems to be a tautology”, and he then observes that Janya of the *TB* list stands for the Śūdra “in the sense of a man of the hostile tribe as in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* VIII 26, as originally he was.” But in the passage quoted last *janyāni* is equated not with the hostile tribes meaning Śūdras, but with the king’s rivals who vie with and hate him (*sapatnā vai dvishanto bhrātrivṛyā janyāni* in the original), some of whom presumably were men of the Kshatriya caste. In the next place Caland (*op. cit.*, p. 145) has shown by a comparison with the parallel texts of *MS* and *Mān. ŚS* that *janya mitra* is the complete form of *janya* of the *TB* list, and that it means ‘a friend from a foreign country’ (‘ein Freund aus der Fremde’). By the same comparison Caland has proved the correct reading of the *ĀpŚS*. text to the *janyo mitram* [in place of *janyamitram* and other variants given in Garbe’s edition in *Bib. Ind.* series, p. 66].

It thus appears that the relevant texts do not support the case for the Śūdra’s participation in the besprinkling ceremony. As regards the part played by the persons actually mentioned, we may first refer to the dogmatic exposition of the texts themselves. To begin with the White *Yajus* ritual, ŚB v. 3-5. 11-14, explaining the result (or the cause) of the besprinkling by the Brahman, one of the King’s own and the friendly *rājanya* respectively, states that the sacrificer is thereby sprinkled (endowed) successively with priestly dignity, with sustenance and with support. As for the Black *Yajus* ritual *MS* IV. 4.2 declares the consequence of the ceremony to be that the sacrificer is endowed by the Brahman with priestly dignity, he acquires strength from the people, he wins vigour as well as food and the like from the rival, and he gains through the *janya* a friend. According to *TB* I.7.8.7 the Brahman endows him with priestly dignity, the *Rājanya* with vigour and food, the *Vaiśya* with abundance and the *Janya* is the means of gaining him friends. Equating the King’s ‘own man’ and the friendly *Rājanya* of the ŚB text with the *Rājanya*—*Kshatriya*—*Bhrātrivṛya* and with the *janya mitra* of other texts respectively, and allowing for the occurrence of the *adhvaryu*

(or *brahman*) priest in all lists, we may estimate the significance of the besprinkling ceremony in the following way. In so far as the *adhvaryu* and the *rājanya* (or their equivalents) as well as the *vaiśya* are concerned, they involve the participation of representatives of the three higher castes in the central ceremony of the Vedic coronation. This marks the closest approach to the principle of representation of estates that the Vedic State ever attained. On the other hand the participation of the *janya mitra* ('a friend from a foreign country') probably indicates the importance of the foreign ally for the Vedic State, thus anticipating the *suhṛit* of the stock list of seven limbs (*saptāṅga*) of the *Arthasāstra-Smṛiti* polity of later times.¹⁰ We may sum up by saying that the besprinkling ceremony of the *Rājasūya* represents, not as Jayaswal thinks, (*op. cit.*, p. 209), the single principle of representation of estates, but rather the combination of this principle with that of political alliances of the Vedic State.

The sacrificer's enthronement

After the king has descended from the chariot, he is ceremonially seated on a wooden throne. Then the priest touches him on the chest with a formula stating that Varuṇa *dhṛita-vrata* ('upholder of the sacred law,' Eggeling; 'of sure vows,' Keith) has set him down in the waters, with keen insight, for lordship. Commenting on the above in the *VS.* version (X27), *ŚB* (V4.4.5) boldly transfers the epithet *dhṛita-vrata* from the god Varuṇa to the king as well as the learned Brāhmaṇa (*śrotriya*). Then it adds the following remarkable words:— "That he should speak only what is right and do what is right, of that he as well as the *śrotriya* is capable; for these two are the upholders of the sacred law among men." This passage, by attaching the notion of unrivalled moral greatness to the King along with the learned Brāhmaṇa, marks a distinct phase in the conceptual evolution of Vedic kingship. The Vedic King, according to this view, is the embodiment of righteousness, being matched only by the learned Brāhmaṇa.

In the White *Yajus* ritual there takes place immediately afterwards the curious ceremony of the priests' silently striking the king with sticks on the back. Explaining this ceremony *ŚB* v. 4. 4. 7 observes that they thereby guide him safely over judicial punishment, whence the King is exempt from punishment. According to *KŚS* xv. 7. 6. the priest thereby cleanses him from sin, or else carries him beyond death.¹¹ The significance of this rite has been understood differently by scholars. According to Weber

¹⁰ On the doctrine of seven limbs of the monarchic State vide *IPI* pp. 84, 119.

¹¹ We quote below the three important texts mentioned above:—(a) *nishasāda dhṛitavrata iti dhṛitavrato vai rājā na va' esha sarvasmā'iva vadanāya na sarvasmā'iva karmanē yadeva sādhu vadetyat sādhu kuryāt tasmāi vā esha cha śrotriyaścaj etau ha vai dvau manu-*

shyeshu dhṛitavratau/ tasmādāha nishasāda dhṛitavrata iti (ŚB V 4.4.5 explaining ceremony of touching the sacrificer's chest by priest); (b) athainam prishthatastūshṇimeva daṇḍairghnanti/ tam daṇḍairghnanto daṇḍavadhamatinayanti/ tasmād rājādandyo yade-nam daṇḍavadhamatinayanti (ŚB V 4.4.7 explaining ceremony of king's

Über den Rājasūya p. 63) it indicates the height of priestly authority. On the other hand Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 209), while characterising the explanation of ŚB as "an amusing piece of euphemism", explains that the rod is "the symbolic sceptre of justice;" hence the action conveys "the view of the sacred commonlaw that the King was not above, but under the law". Now if we confine ourselves, as we must, to the interpretation of the the *Brāhmaṇa* and *Sūtra* texts just quoted, we have to understand the above as a ceremony of the king's purification or acquisition of special privileges, not that of assertion of priestly domination. In the next place it seems doubtful how far the significance of *daṇḍa* as the symbol of justice—so well known to the *Smṛiti-Arthśāstra* polity—can be traced back to the Vedic times. What seems certain is that the ŚB passage quoted above partially supported by the KŚS text, claims for the King the exceptional privilege of immunity from punishment—a claim which does not appear to be justified by any other Vedic text and is afterwards definitely denied in the *Smṛiti-Arthśāstra* Polity.¹²

While the King remains seated on the throne, there takes place according to all ritualistic schools an interesting dialogue between him and the assembled priest (or priests). Five times, according to the White *Yajus* ritual, the King addresses the Brahman priest as 'O Brahman! The latter replies as many times with words beginning with 'O Brahman' and followed in turn by the phrases

'Thou art Savitar, of true impulsion,' 'Thou art Varuṇa, of true power,' 'Thou art Indra, mighty through the people,' 'Thou art Rudra, the most kindly.'

In the Black *Yajus* ritual as also in the ritual of other schools the King addresses the four chief priests (Adhvaryu, Brahman, Hotṛi, Udgātṛi) successively as 'O Brahman,' only to be greeted in turn as

'Thou, O King, art the Brahman priest, Thou art Savitr of true instigation,' 'Thou, O King, art the Brahman priest, Thou art Indra of true force', 'Thou, O King, art the Brahman priest, Thou art Indra, the kindly', 'Thou O King art the Brahman priest, Thou art Varuṇa of true rule'.¹³

According to Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 210) this signifies that "the Brahmin may not now be addressed by his privileged designation of superiority" which "is given to the King by the whole nation including the Brahmin": thus "the sovereign and the popular representative character of the King is pointed out." Now we may admit that the above formulas involve for once

striking by priest), (c) *pāpmānaḥ te'pahanmo'ti tvā vadham na yāmīti vā* (KŚS XV 7.6).

¹² On the king's liability to pay compensation for property stolen and not

recovered vide *IPi* pp. 50-01, 118.

¹³ Refs to dialogue between sacrificer and priest:—*VS* X 28, *SB* V 4.4.9-12, *KŚS* XV 7.8, *TS* I, 8. 16, *TB* I, 7, 10, *ApŚS* XVIII, 18. 8-13. Cf. *BŚS* XII, 14.

(at least in theory) a clear renunciation of the Brāhmaṇa's superior status in favour of the King, as well as the King's identification with certain leading deities of the Vedic pantheon. But we do not think that the texts warrant the quasi-legal and political conception of sovereignty suggested by Jayaswal. It only implies, according to our view, the foremost social status of the King in the Vedic State. With this may be compared the still more direct reference in *ŚB* V. 4. 2. 7 explaining the *Rājasūya* ritual of the priests' pouring the remainder of the consecration water into the Brāhmaṇa's vessel after the besprinkling ceremony. By this act we are told the Brāhmaṇa is made an object of respect after the King.

The game of dice

In the next important ceremony, namely the King's playing a game of dice, we find a striking difference between the White and Black *Yajus* rituals. According to the White *Yajus* texts the sacrificial sword is first passed round successively from the *adhvaryu* (or *purohita*) to the King, the King's brother, the *sūta* (or else the *śhapati*), the *grāmaṇi* and the tribesman (*sajāta*) to the accompaniment of a proper formula (*mantra*). Then the *adhvaryu* and the tribesman prepare the gaming ground with the sacrificial sword, and the *adhvaryu* wins for the King a cow staked by the tribesman. In the Black *Yajus* texts, on the other hand, the sacrificial sword is passed round in succession from the Brahman priest to the King, his dear son or friend, the *purohita*, the *ratnins* and so on to the *akshāvāpa*. After the *akshāvāpa* had marked the gaming ground, a Brāhmaṇa, a Kshatriya, a Vaiśya and a Śūdra play for a cow. Finally, the king invites with auspicious epithets the *saṁgrahītri*, the *bhāgadugha* and the *kṣhatṛi* to become witnesses.¹⁴

In discussing the constitutional significance of the above ceremonies, we may begin by stating that they express, explicitly according to the White *Yajus* texts and implicitly according to those of the Black *Yajus*, the priestly author's view of the proper gradation of official ranks in the Vedic State. As regards the White *Yajus* ritual *ŚB* V. 4. 4. 15-19, explaining the initial ceremony, says that the person passing round the sacrificial sword makes the one to whom it is passed in each case weaker than himself. In the case of the Brāhmaṇa it adds a special *apologĩa* to the effect that "indeed the King who is weaker than a Brāhmaṇa is stronger than his enemies." Summing up its explanation it says, "And as to why they mutually hand it on in this way, they do so lest there should be a confusion of classes and in order that (society) may be in the proper order." According to this passage, therefore, the test of a good State

¹⁴ Ritual of passing round of sacrificial sword and game of dice:— *VS* X, 29, *SB.* V, 4.4. 15-23, *KSS* XV, 7. 11-20, *TS* I. 8. 16, *TBI*, 7. 10, *VSS* III 1. 1. 45, *Ap SS* XVIII, 18. 14-18, *ibid* 19. 6-8. The auspicious epithets are *susloka*

(‘far-famed one’), *sumāṅgala* (‘most prosperous one’) and *satvarājan* (‘true king’) applied to the *saṁgrahītri*, the *bhāgadugha* and the *kṣhatṛi* respectively.

and society is the subordination of the temporal to the spiritual power—a position which marks the extreme sacerdotalist view on this point. Of other persons in the list the superiority of the *sūta* to the *grāmaṇi* is in accordance with their relative positions in the *ratnin* list to which reference has been made above. The equivalence of the *sthapati* ('chief judge' or 'governor') to the *sūta* is an interesting additional reference to the Vedic administrative organization. Lastly, the staking of a cow by a tribesman and the King's winning the stake from him probably symbolises the assertion of the royal sacrificer's rule over the common freeman. Coming to the Black *Yajus* ritual, it is significant of the changed conception of gradation of official ranks that the *purohita* comes after the King and his dear son or friend. On the other hand it is remarkable that here also the *purohita*, like the Brahman priest in the *ratnin* lists, stands ahead of this class. The staking of a cow by the representatives of the four castes and the King's taking three officials well known to the *ratnin* lists as his witnesses, probably symbolises the solemn assertion of rule of the royal sacrificer over every class of his subjects.

*Alleged allusions to coronation-oath in description
of Rājasūya ceremonies*

In some of the ceremonies above described beginning with the king's enthronement and ending with the game of dice, Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 202) has sought to find a number of allusions to the king's coronation-oath, which he thinks is fully stated in the *AB* account of the Great Consecration of Indra to be discussed below. Quoting in this context *VS* X 27 and parallel passages from *TS*, *TB*, and *AB*, he argues that "the king-elect" "is unanimously held to have taken a vow (*dhṛita-vrata*) before he is seated on the throne": "the vow, promise or oath", he further thinks, "is again alluded to in the phrases of a *TB* text (I 7.10.1-6) namely, *satya-sava* ('of true sacrifice'), *satya-dharmā* ('of true or faithful conduct'), *sātyāṇṛite Varuṇaḥ* ('Varuṇa is authority in truth or oath and falsehood or faithlessness'), *satya-rāja* ('true king')." These arguments are open to exception on the following grounds. Firstly, so far from the texts being unanimous on the point, *ŚB* (V 4.4.5) alone by a bold effort transfers the epithet *dhṛitavrata* from the divine Varuṇa to the human king. Secondly, in making this transference *ŚB* interprets *dhṛita-vrata* not in the constitutional sense of the king's observance of his coronation-oath, but of his being the embodiment (along with the learned *Brāhmaṇa*) of righteousness. Thirdly, the *dhṛita-vrata* formula in all the texts is uttered not before, but after the king's ceremonial enthronement, and the phrase itself appears to be properly translated with Eggeling as 'upholder of the sacred law' rather than as 'taking a vow'. Fourthly, the point of the *TB* text quoted above, namely, that the king is thereby made Savitṛi *satyasava*, Indra *satyaujāḥ* and Varuṇa *satyadharmā* is rendered somewhat nugatory by the following passage where we read

that Varuṇa is *satya* ('truth') and *aṇṛita* ('falsehood'), and the priest thereby wins for the king both these attributes. Fifthly and lastly, there is no warrant for interpreting *satya* of the above passage in the constitutional sense of the coronation oath.

At the conclusion of this discussion of the significance of the *Rājasūya* ceremony after the different ritualistic texts, we may mention a particular ritual of the *Sāmaveda* school which gives the author the occasion for stating his view of the mutual relations of the three higher social classes. Here we are told (*PB* XVIII 10. 8-9) in explanation of appropriate chants at the consecration ceremony, that thereby he takes *brahma* (the spiritual power) from *kshatra* (the temporal power), and "therefore the Brāhmaṇas are able to punish in return their supporters (i.e. the nobles)." Again we read that thereby "he encompasses for him (i.e. the king) the people (*viś*) on both sides, the people will not retire from him, (but serve him)". In these two extracts is embodied the priestly author's view of the Brāhmaṇa's superiority to the Kshatriya and of the subjection of the Vaiśyas to the king.

B. *Distinctive ceremonies of royal consecration in Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*

Introductory

AB begins its account of the ceremonies of royal consecration with a few dogmatic statements which are of high constitutional significance. Thus in the first place we read (*AB* VII 19) that by virtue of the original creation by 'the Lord of Creatures' (*Prajāpati*), the Brāhmaṇa was made 'the eater of oblations' (*hutāda*), while the Rājanya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra were made 'those who do not eat the oblations' (*ahutāda*). In the same context *AB* narrates a legend to explain how 'the sacrificer even now finds support in *brahma* and the Brāhmaṇas', while the Kshatriya sacrificer even now goes to the sacrifice only after shedding his distinctive weapons and assuming the form of the Brāhmaṇa. In the second extract (VII 20) *AB* takes up and answers the question—it being assumed that the Brāhmaṇa, the Rājanya or the Vaiśya, before consecration, begs the sacrificial ground (*devayajana*) from a Kshatriya—

'Whom is the Kshatriya in such a case to ask?'

The third extract (*AB* VII 22) introduces us, in connexion with its account of the libations for preventing the decay of sacrifices and gifts, to a parallel set of prayers to the gods Indra and Agni for favour of *brahma* and *kshatra* respectively. What is more, it mentions both at the beginning and at the conclusion of the sacrifice the remarkable prayer, 'May *brahma* guard me from *kshatra*', and 'May *kshatra* guard me from *brahma*.' This is explained to mean that "he who has recourse to the sacrifice has recourse to *brahma*, and the *brahma* thus delighted

guards him from *kshatra*", and again, that "he who has recourse to the kingship has recourse to *kshatra*, and the *kshatra* thus delighted guards him from *brahma*." The fourth extract (*AB* VII 23-24) relates to the dogmatic exposition of an immediately following ceremony. The Kshatriya, we are told, has before consecration Indra as his deity, along with the appropriate metre and eulogium (*stoma*) and is Rājanya in relationship. Because of his becoming a Brāhmaṇa after consecration Indra takes his power, and the appropriate metre etc. his other qualities, saying, 'He is becoming other than we: he is becoming *brahma*: he is joining *brahma*.' Hence the Kshatriya before consecration should offer a libation with prayer to Indra not to take his power and to the rest not to take away his other qualities. After consecration a Kshatriya has Agni for his deity along with the appropriate metre and *stoma* and is *Brahman* in relationship. Because of his assuming the Kshatriya character at the end, Agni takes his brilliance, and the corresponding metre etc. his other qualities. Hence after the final offering he should offer libations with prayer to Agni and so forth not to take away his brilliance and other qualities. The fifth extract (*AB* VII 25) takes up the question—it being taken for granted that a consecrated Brāhmaṇa is announced under his own name—'How is one to announce the consecration of a Kshatriya?' To the above the answer is given that this should be done with the *ṛishi* descent (*ārsheya*) of the king's *purohita*. Equally characteristic is the answer (*AB* VII 26) to the question, 'Should the Kshatriya eat the sacrificial share?' The answer is that this should be handed over to the *Brahman* priest who stands to the Kshatriya in the relation of the *purohita*, his half-self. In the sixth extract (*AB* VIII 1ff), which gives us the dogmatic exposition of the rules relating to the *śāstras* and *stotras* of the sacrifice, we are first told that *brahma* is prior to *kshatra*, and afterwards that *kshatra* is established on *brahma* and *brahma* on *kshatra*.

The above group of extracts reflects a complex view of the relations between the spiritual and the temporal powers. The first extract involves what may be called the theory of the Brāhmaṇa's Divine Right to the privileges of sacrifice so much so that the Kshatriya can enjoy the same only in a Brahmanical guise. The fifth extract by requiring the Kshatriya sacrificer to be represented by his *Brahman* priest repeats the doctrine that sacrifice is the monopoly of the Brāhmaṇa. With these extracts we may contrast *ŚB* IV 5.2.16 which by implication declares both the Brāhmaṇa and the Kshatriya to be equally entitled to the eating of oblations. The third and the fourth extracts bring out—the latter more graphically than the former—the principle of inherent antagonism between the spiritual and the temporal powers in the natural setting of a king participating in what is after all an essentially Brahmanical ceremony. The sixth extract reflects a twofold view of the mutual relations of the spiritual and the temporal powers in the Vedic State centering respectively around the superiority of the former to the latter and their interdependence.

A completely different view of the mutual relations of the two powers

in the context of the author's exposition of the civil status of the three castes in relation to the Kshatriya is presented before us in another remarkable extract (*AB* VII 27-34) which deals with the dogmatic explanation of the proper food of the king at the sacrifice. The Kshatriya sacrificer, we are told, should not take *soma* or curds or water, the food of the Brahmans, Vaiśyas and Śūdras respectively. For in that case there will be born in his offspring one like a Brāhmaṇa, Vaiśya or Śūdra, and the second or third from him may become a Brāhmaṇa, Vaiśya or Śūdra. In explaining the evil consequences of this act the author mentions (VII 29) what is doubtless the fullest and the most remarkable summary of the civil disabilities of the three castes. The Brāhmaṇa, we are told, is 'an acceptor of gifts, a drinker (of Soma), a seeker of livelihood, one to be moved at will,' the Vaiśya is 'tributary to another, to be eaten by another, to be oppressed at will', and lastly, the Śūdra is 'the servant of another, to be removed at will, to be slain at will.' It follows from this description that the Śūdras formed the class of hereditary slaves without the right of personal security, while the Vaiśyas not only bore the burden of taxation, but what is more remarkable, had little or no security of person and property. These statements find some support in the legends of creation of the four castes (*varṇas*) (*TS* VII 1. 1. 4-6, *PB* VI 1.6-11) where we are told that the Vaiśya is to be eaten and the Śūdra is dependant on others. What seems unique in the above passage is the relative absence of civil rights even of the Brāhmaṇas. This is a striking reminder of the limitations to which the authority of the Brāhmaṇa with all his high pretensions was actually subject in the Vedic State.¹⁵

Punarabhisheka and Aindra-mahābhisheka

It is at the end of these preliminary remarks on isolated points of doctrine and ritual the *AB* begins its description of the consecration ceremony proper. This ceremony has two forms both of which are unknown to the other schools, namely, *Punarabhisheka* ('renewed consecration') and *Aindramahābhisheka* ('The great consecration of kings after Indra's fashion'). Beginning with the first-named sacrifice, *AB* VIII 5-9 mentions successively its component rites, namely the collection of materials, the mounting on the throne, the consecration with the sacred waters, the descent from the throne and so forth. In the accompanying formula the sacrificer is said to mount the throne for *rājya*, *sāmrajya*, *bhaujya*, *svārājya*, *vairājya*, *pārameshthya*, *rājya* (a second time), *māhārājya*, *ādhipatya*, *svāvaśya* and *atishthā*. After descending

¹⁵ While the above extract (*AB* VII 29) gives us the fullest and the most remarkable summary of the civil disabilities of the three other castes in comparison with the Kshatriya, we may well doubt whether it reflects the

priestly author's own view on the subject. It is professedly a quotation from another teacher and ill-suits its present context which contemplates the king's status to be inferior to that of the Brāhmaṇa.

from the throne the sacrificer thrice utters the formula of salutation to Brahman (*namo brahmane*). Verily thus, explains the author, 'kshatra falls under *brahma*'. In the above the first extract with its string of eleven epithets suggests the idea of an Imperial State as distinguished from a single monarchy, although it may not be possible to explain the precise connotation of those epithets. The second extract involves the principle of subordination of the temporal to the spiritual power of which we have so many instances in other ritualistic texts.¹⁶

Immediately after its description of the ceremony of 'renewed consecration' AB VIII 12-23 introduces us to its account of the Great Consecration of Indra by the gods in heaven, and that of the King by the priest on this earth. Common to both ceremonies are the collection of materials, mounting of the throne by the sacrificer, proclamation of the sacrificer (by the All-Gods in heaven, or else by the King-makers on this earth), besprinkling of the sacrificer and so forth. In the formula for mounting the throne (ibid 12 and 17) Indra and the King are made to state that they are mounting the same for *sāmraja*, *bhauja*, *svāraja*, *vairāja*, *rāja*, *pārameshtha*, *māhāraja* etc. Similar strings of epithets are used in the formula used before and after the consecration (ibid 13-14; 18-19). In this case the specific groups of deities are mentioned as consecrating Indra as well the King in the different quarters of the sky for as many different forms of lordship. Thus we read that the Vasus in the East anoint him for *sāmraja*, the Rudras in the South for *bhauja*, the Ādityas in the West for *svāraja*, the All-Gods in the North for *vairāja*, the Maruts and Aṅgirasas in the upward quarter for *pārameshtha*, and lastly the *Sādhyas* and the *Āptyas* in 'this firm middle' for *rāja* etc. Explaining this formula with reference to Indra AB further states that for this reason the Kings of the East, South, West, North and Middle are consecrated respectively for *sāmraja*, *bhauja*, *svāraja*, *vairāja* and *rāja* and called by the corresponding titles. Although the reference to the upward quarter is obviously a piece of fiction, we have in the above extract the fullest attempt at what may be called the regional classification of States or constitutions that is found in the Vedic literature.¹⁷ If we could distinguish the precise significance of the terms in

¹⁶ Weber (*op. cit.*, p. 112n), after contrasting the series of epithets piled upon the king in the above extract with his exclusion from the Soma drink, concludes from the double occurrence of *rāja* in the list that originally it stood alone in the formula and that all the other ten epithets were later additions. In that case the ceremony in its primitive form would refer to a simple monarchy.

¹⁷ Another approach to the regional classification of States is made in a formula relating to the constitution of the fire-altar which is common to all *Yajus Samhitā* schools (VS XIV 13,

XV 10-14; KS XVII 3; MS II 8. 3), and which gives the appellations of *mahishī* (*rājñī* in KS and MS), *virāt*, *samrāt*, *svarāt* and *adhipati* (*adhipatni* in KS and MS) to the East, South, West, North and the Zenith respectively. In JB III 152 in the course of a description of Varuṇa's consecration for the divine kingship we are told that the Vasus consecrated him to *rāja*, the Rudras to *vairāja*, the Ādityas to *svāraja*, the All-Gods to *sāmraja*, the Maruts to *sarvavaśya*, and lastly, the *Sādhyas* and the *Āptyas* to *pārameshtha*.

question, we would have here an exhaustive account of the constitutions known in the *Brāhmaṇa* period to the Vedic people. To the above we may add that *AB* VIII 16, in introducing the Great Consecration ceremony of the king, claims to ensure not only 'superiority, pre-eminence and supremacy over all Kings', but also the position of 'sole ruler', 'from the one end up to the further side of the earth bounded by the ocean'.¹⁸ In this remarkable passage we are introduced to the conception of universal monarchy extending over the land up to its natural limits as well as that of paramount sovereignty.

At the beginning of the ceremony mentioned last (*AB* VIII 15) the priest proposes and the Kshatriya repeats with faith (*śraddhā*) the text of a solemn oath binding the latter under terrible moral sanctions to keep his trust by the former.¹⁹ According to Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 202) the above contains the text of the coronation-oath which is "simply alluded to and not repeated in other *Brāhmaṇas*." Now the phrases 'if thou dost play me false' (*yadi me druhyehi*) and 'if I play thee false' (*yadie te druheyam*), uttered by the priest and the Kshatriya respectively in the text just mentioned, are conclusive evidence of the fact that the beneficiary of the oath is not the body of subjects, but the individual priest.²⁰ With this we may compare the similar, but more equitable mutual oath of King and priest in the royal consecration ceremony of the *Kauśika Sūtra* (XVII 6.7).²¹

In the proclamation formula to which reference has been made above, among other titles applied to the divine and the human sacrificer are mentioned 'eater of the people' (*viśāmatā*), 'protector of Brahman' or 'of *Brāhmaṇas*' (*brahmaṇo goptā* in Indra's case, *brāhmaṇānām goptā* in case of the King), and 'protector of *dharma*' (*dharmasya goptā*). The first title crystallises the Vedic author's view of the Vaiśya's civil disabilities to which reference has been made above. In the other two epithets we are introduced to the twofold function of the King,—the protection of *dharma* and of *Brāhmaṇas*—which becomes a commonplace in the *Smṛiti* State of later times.

¹⁸ The text in the original is as follows:—"tānahamanu rājyāya sām-rājyāya bhaujyāya svārājyāya vairājyāya pārameshthyāya rājyāya mähārājyāyādhipatyāya svāśyāyātishthāyārohamityetāmāsandimārohet. The above corresponds to 8th *pañchikā* and the 37th *adhyāya* in Samarami's ed. Vol. IV pp. 186-87.

¹⁹ The coronation-oath (*AB* VIII 15) is given below in Prof. Keith's tr.:—"From the night of my birth to that of my death, for the space between these two, my sacrifice and my gifts, my place, my good deeds, my life, and mine offspring, mayest thou take if I play thee false."

²⁰ With Jayaswal's view followed by

Dr. R. C. Majumdar (*Ancient India*, p. 79) contrast Weber who rightly takes the above text (*Über den Vajapeya*, p. 155n) to be characteristic of the high pretensions of the priestly hierarchy, in as much as even the sole ruler of the earth bounded by the ocean has submissively to swear to be true to his priest.

²¹ The original text *Kauśika Sūtra* XVII 6-7 runs as follows:—"sahaiva nau sukṛitāṁ saha dush-kṛitāṁ Brahṁā brūyāt/ yo dush-kṛitāṁ karavattasya dushkṛitāṁ sukṛitāṁ nau saheti." The above is quoted from p. 45 of Bloomfield's ed. called *The Kauśika-sūtra of the Atharvaveda*.

C. *Vājapeya*

Introductory

While the routine of sacrificial rites which we have examined so far relates exclusively to the King, it is otherwise with the ritual complex to which we now turn. According to ŚSS. XVI 17.1-3 the *Vājapeya* ("the drink of strength") is open to the Brāhmaṇa, the Rājanya and the Vaiśya, but the other ritualistic texts confine it (by implication or exclusively) to the Brāhmaṇa and the Rājanya. The purpose and end of this ceremony reflect the variety of classes entitled to its performance. For while one authority prescribes it (evidently in relation to the Vaiśya sacrificer) for one desiring abundance of food, another requires it to be performed by a King or a Brāhmaṇa desirous of lordship (*ādhipatya*). Comparing the two ceremonies evidently from the point of view of the Kshatriya sacrificer, *TB* I 7.6.1 declares *Vājapeya* to be *samrātsava* (consecration to the position of *samrāt*) and *Rājasūya* to be *Varuṇasava* (consecration to the universal sovereignty of Varuṇa). Again *SB* V 1.1.13 observes that while one attains the position of *samrāt* by performing *Vājapeya*, he attains that of *rājan* by the performance of *Rājasūya*, the position of *samrāt* being higher than that of *rājan*. *VSS* III 1.2.47 briefly observes that the performer of *Vājapeya* is called *samrāt*. In the above we can detect a tendency in the first place to deprive the Vaiśya of his religious rights shared by him (according to one view) equally with the two upper classes. In the second place, we notice a tendency to distinguish the conception of an Imperial or a Universal State from that of a single monarchy.

We have seen above how the Brāhmaṇas and the Kshatriyas (according to most authorities) together with the Vaiśya (according to one authority), are eligible for the *Vājapeya* sacrifice. Nevertheless these classes are sharply distinguished from one another in the accompanying ritual. Thus *SB* V 1.1.11 justifies the eligibility of the Brāhmaṇa and the Rājanya at the outset by saying that it was performed by Bṛihaspati and Indra representing the two classes respectively. Again not only do the texts prescribe different formulas for the two classes (the Brāhmaṇa addressing his prayer to Bṛihaspati and the king to Indra), but they even distinguish between the priestly Bṛihaspati with his heaven, and the warrior Indra and his heaven. Even the Vaiśyas, according to ŚSS, had their own tutelary gods (namely, the Maruts) and their heaven.²² These passages reflect one of the fundamental features of the Vedic

²² Texts on eligibility to *Vājapeya*:—
(a) *śaradi vājapeyena yajeta brāhmaṇo rājanyo vardhi-kāmaḥ* (*ApSS* XVIII 1. 1); (b) *brāhmaṇo rājanyo vā śaradi vājapeyena yajeta* (*VSS* XIII 1. 1); (c) *yam brāhmaṇā rājānaścha puraskurvīran sa vājapeyena yajeta*

(*LSS* VIII 11. 1.); (d) *vājapeyah śaradyavaiśyasya* (*KSS* XIV 1). On different *mantras* for Brāhmaṇa and Kshatriya cf. *VS* IX 10-12, *SB* V 1. 5. 2-12. On distinct deities of Brāhmaṇas, Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas, vide *SSS* XVI 17. 1-3.

socio-political system, namely, the complete separation of the spiritual from the temporal power and of both from the other classes.

When we turn to consider the social and constitutional significance of the *Vājapeya* sacrifice, we have to concentrate on three of its component rites. These are; firstly, a chariot-race which is won by the sacrificer in a contest with sixteen other competitors; secondly, mounting of the sacrificial post by the sacrificer and his wife; thirdly and lastly, besprinkling by the priest of the sacrificer who is seated on a black antelope skin. At the preliminary stage of the first ceremony a Rājanya shoots an arrow for fixing the goal of the race. This is explained by *ŚB* (V 1.5.14) in a remarkable passage which says:—"And as to why a Rājanya shoots—he, the Rājanya, is most manifestly of Prajāpati ('the Lord of creatures'); hence, while being one, he rules over many." At a later stage a Vaiśya or a Rājanya, mounting one of the seventeen chariots for the race, is made to exchange a cup of honey for one of *surā* given by the priest. Explaining this ceremony both *ŚB* V 1.5.28 and *TB* I 3.3.7 declare that the priest thus imbibes the sacrificer with truth and smites the Vaiśya with untruth. In the above the first extract involves a principle which was destined to be developed fully in the *Manusamhitā* and the *Mahābhārata*, namely, that the king derives his authority from his equivalence to the gods—in this case the Highest Deity of the Brāhmaṇa pantheon. The second group of passages indicates a tendency (which we have likewise observed elsewhere) towards degradation of the Vaiśya in comparison with the Brāhmaṇa and the Kshatriya, so as to lead eventually to the doctrine of the two powers (the spiritual and the temporal) dominating the society and the State.

Coming to the second ceremony we have to state that the sacrificer and his wife, while mounting the sacrificial post at the end of the chariot-race, declare in a formula which is common to both the *Yajus* schools that they have become Prajāpati's children and have become immortal. This passage, by connecting the sacrificer and his wife with Prajāpati, marks the climax of the Brāhmaṇa doctrine of the king's divinity by means of the sacrifice. After the sacrificer is mounted on the post, he is presented with salt by Vaiśyas (according to White *Yajus* school) and by the four chief priests (according to the ritual of the Black *Yajurveda*). Explaining the former rite *ŚB* (V 2.1.17) states that the Maruts representing the *viś* are food. In the first instance it will be observed, the Vaiśyas explicitly, and in the second case the Brāhmaṇas by implication, are held to be the source of the king's subsistence. After the sacrificer has dismounted from his post and is seated on the throne, or at the time of his dismounting (according to the alternative versions of the White and the Black *Yajus* ritual as represented by *ŚB* V. 2. 1. 25 and *Āp. ŚS* XVIII. 5. 20 respectively) a remarkable prayer is uttered by the presiding priest or group of priests. In the *ŚB* text above quoted (explaining in the prayer in *VS* IX. 22) we read, according to the authoritative version of Eggeling, "He spreads it with 'This is thy kingship'! whereby

he endows him with royal power. He then makes him sit down with 'Thou art the ruler, the ruling lord!', whereby he makes him the ruler ruling over those subjects of his;—'Thou art firm and steadfast!' whereby he makes him firm and steadfast in this world;—'Thee for the tilling—Thee for peaceful dwelling—Thee for wealth—Thee for thrift!', whereby he means to say, ('here I seat) thee for the welfare (of the people).'' Interpreting the opening words of the above in a different sense, Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, pp. 207-08) concludes that "Hindu kingship" depended upon "the sacred act of delivering the trust, and not on any other principle such as that of succession or inheritance." Now in the parallel version of *TS* I.7.9 the prayer addressed to the sacrificer (as we learn from the accompanying ritualistic texts) by the four chief priests from as many directions of the compass is in Professor Keith's scholarly version as follows:—'For food thee! for proper food thee! for strength thee! for the conquering strength thee.' Of the same nature are the prayers in the corresponding passages of *KS* XIV 1.4 and *MS* I. 11.3. It will be observed that the trend of all the passages quoted above is to ensure for the royal sacrificer by the utterance of the appropriate prayers the characteristic attributes of his office, such as supreme and undisputed political authority, peace and plenty as well as strength. A similar prayer is uttered on behalf of the royal sacrificer at the horse-sacrifice ceremony in *TS* VII. 1. 11. Jayaswal's argument is based upon his forced rendering of the relevant passages in *VS* IX. 22 ("To thee this State is given...to thee (this State is given) for agriculture, for well-being, for prosperity, for development" in place of the plain meaning "This is thy kingship...thee for the tilling" etc. quoted above) and his attachment of an exclusive constitutional significance to the opening words in *SB* V. 2. 1. 25 ("whereby he endows him with royal power" matching similar references to the consequence of various other acts of the Vedic coronation ritual). To the above we may add that the closing sentence of the *SB* extract quoted above "thee for the welfare" affords no justification for Eggeling's addition (within brackets) of the words "of the people". In the result it follows that Jayaswal's theory of kingship as a public trust is unwarranted by the texts of the Vedic coronation ceremonies.²³

Passing to the last ceremony namely that of besprinkling by the priest,

²³ Common White and Black *Yajus* prayers accompanying mounting of the sacrificial post by the sacrificer and his wife:—*VS* IX 21, *TS* I 7. 9, *MS* I 11. 3, *KS* XIV 1, *TB* I 3. 7. 5, *ApSS* XVIII 5. 14. Vide *SB* V 2. 1. 17 for presentation of salt by Vaiśyas, *TS* I 7. 9, *MS* I 11. 3 for presentation of same by the four chief priests, and *ApSS* XVIII 5-6 for its presentation by four Vaiśyas or four chief priests. Vide *SBE*. Vol. XLI, p. 36 for Eggeling's version of *SB*, V. 2.1.25, and *HOS*. Vol. XVIII and notes for Keith's

version of *TS* I 7. 9. The text of *VS*. IX. 22, is as follows:—*iyam te rāt yantāsi yamano dhruvo' si dharunah krishyai tvā kshemāya tvā rayyai tvā poshāya tvā*, with which we may compare the passage in *TS* I 7.9:—*annāya tvā annādyāya tvā vājāya tvā vāyajityāya tvā*. The concluding sentence of *SB* V 2.1.25 reads as follows:—*'krshyai tvā kshemāya tvā rayyai tvā poshāya tve' ti sādhave tvevevaitādāha*. The other parallel texts are unnecessary to quote here.

we may mention that the sacrificer is said in the accompanying formula to be consecrated to the supreme lordship (*sāmrajya*) of Bṛihaspati in the White *Yajus* ritual (*VS* IX 30 and *ŚB* V 2.2.14) and to those of Bṛihaspati and Indra, or else of these as well as Agni in the ritual of the Black *Yajurveda* (*KS* XIV 2, *MS* I 11.4 and *TS* I 7.10, *TB* I 3.8). Explaining this rite *ŚB* (*loc. cit.*) observes that the priest thereby makes him attain to the fellowship of Bṛihaspati and co-existence in his world. After the besprinkling ceremony the priest acclaim the sacrificer (*ŚB* V 2.2.15) as 'All-ruler', and commends him to the protection of the gods of whom he has become one. We may take the above to mean, according to the fuller version in the Black *Yajurveda*, the elevation of the Brāhmaṇa and the Kshatriya sacrificer to the status of the respective deities by virtue of their performance of the sacrificial act. The reference to the single god Bṛihaspati in the *Mādhyandina* recension of *VS* which is not shared by the Kāṇva recension as well as by the other *Yajus-Saṃhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas* probably indicates, as Weber suggests (*op. cit.*, p. 28), a reconstruction of the whole stuff in the special priestly sense.

Conclusion

Let us attempt, in conclusion, to sum up as far as possible the leading characteristics of the late Vedic State as embodied in the ceremonies of royal and imperial consecration above described. In making this attempt it is well to remember at the outset that the above ceremonies with their accompanying formulas necessarily reflect the Vedic polity only in some of its aspects and in the setting of a standardised (though not rigidly fixed) sacrificial routine. It must again be admitted that the expositions of the rituals with their formulas, according to the different Vedic schools and sub-schools, are strongly coloured with their characteristic beliefs and prejudices. In the absence of more concrete facts such as those of the Anglo-Saxon charters and laws, it is impossible to judge how far the imperfect and one-sided picture drawn by our present authorities corresponds to the Vedic State in its true historical light. Subject to this important qualification the following conclusions may be drawn from our survey of the consecration ceremonies about the characteristics of the late Vedic State as well as Society.

- (1) Monarchy was generally in the tribal stage. But already the higher type of territorial kingship had emerged in some quarters. We have besides the conception of an Imperial State as well as of a universal monarchy extending over the whole land up to its natural frontier.
- (2) Kingship was explicitly a human institution, there being no trace of the king's descent from the gods. Nevertheless the king's authority as a whole as well as in its component attributes was generally held to be derived from divine favour or from the sacrifice. Exceptionally it was supposed to be based upon the king's Kshatriya birth (with divinely ordained functions?) or from his semi-divinity. The king's status was

not derived from his consecration. Occasionally the king is conceived to be the embodiment of righteousness. But of a coronation-oath binding the king in his relations with his people there is no trace, nor again is there any warrant for the view that kingship was a public trust.

(3) The king was explicitly entrusted with the protection of Law (*dharma*) and of Brāhmaṇas, while he was credited in some quarters with immunity from punishment, and his justice was held to prevail over all rival jurisdictions.

(4) The chief priests, the queens, the officers of the court and the household, the nobles and even the artisan classes enjoyed a sufficiently high constitutional status to be joined with the king at an important ceremony of his consecration. But of a regularly constituted Council of Nobles or a Popular Assembly (such as the *sabhā* and the *saṃiti* of other texts) there is no trace. The military element in the administration was subordinate to the civil. There was a regular gradation of ranks in the body of the king's courtiers and attendants.

(5) The principle of political representation was applied to the important sections of the people as well as select officials or courtiers for the purpose of participation in the king's consecration. We find even an approach to the principle of representation of estates in connexion with one of the coronation ceremonies.

(6) Among the four classes of the Indian social system the Brāhmaṇa, the Rājanya (or the Kshatriya) and the Vaiśya alone counted as factors of the State. In particular the Brāhmaṇa and the Rājanya were regarded as its two ruling powers. Not only, however, were these two powers sharply distinguished from each other, but between them there was conceived to be an inherent antagonism which could be modified into the conception of their interdependence. The spiritual power, again, generally claimed superiority to the temporal power, but sometimes it was admitted that the latter was superior to the former. The Brāhmaṇas, further, claimed to form a (spiritual) State ruled by the divine Soma alongside the temporal State ruled by the human king and consisting of the other castes. In contrast with the other classes, the Śūdra was denied political and religious rights so as to disqualify him for participation in the consecration ceremonies.

(7) The Vedic polity bore within it the germs of an inter-State system, in the sense that the king's foreign ally was associated with the three upper classes of his subjects in a particular ceremony of the royal consecration.²⁴

²⁴ For the abbreviations used in this chapter see Preface pp. xxiii and xxiv.

CHAPTER X

VEDIC POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

The recent discussions on the characteristic features of the Vedic polity have been concentrated on its three important institutions, namely, kingship, the king's *entourage* and the popular assemblies. We propose to consider here the first and the third of these institutions, reserving the second for discussion in a later chapter.

A. Kingship

Firstly as regards the origin of kingship, Dr. Narayan Chandra Bandyopadhyaya takes the Vedic traditions relating to Manu and to Prithu, son of Veṇa, as well as other traditions bearing on this topic, to point to "recognition of the earliest king as the greatest benefactor, or his evolution from the successful military chieftain". Dr. Beni Prasad, after quoting the stories of the creation of Divine kingship from *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* I 14 and *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* I 59, suggests that warfare tended somehow to originate or strengthen the Vedic kingship. According to Dr. K. P. Jayaswal the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* story just quoted, supposing it to contain a historical reference, suggests that the Indo-Aryans then living in a tribal stage borrowed their institution of kingship from the Dravidians. Dr. A. S. Altekar, after quoting the stories of the origin of Divine kingship from the *Brāhmaṇas* and referring to the patriarchal organisation of Vedic society, opines that "early Indian speculations and the known evolution of the Hindu family" combine to prove that "kingship arose out of the patriarchal atmosphere prevailing in society." According to Dr. V. M. Apte monarchy was the normal form of government in the R̥gvedic Age, because of the patriarchal organisation of Aryan society and of the state of constant warfare between the Vedic Aryans and their neighbours.¹

Now the Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* contain references to Manu as father of the human race and as a culture-hero who taught mankind sacrificial and other duties, while they remember Prithu (with the variants Prithi or Prithi), son of Veṇa, as a seer and as the inventor of agriculture. In some passages Prithu is further declared to be the first consecrated of men, or in other words the first properly constituted ruler. But Manu is nowhere recognised to be the first king. Again a story in *AB.* undoubtedly states the gods to have selected Soma (and not Indra,

¹ Current views of the origin of Vedic kingship:—(a) Narayan Chandra Bandyopadhyaya, *Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories*, Part I, pp. 83-87; (b) Beni Prasad,

The State in Ancient India, p. 26; (c) K. P. Jayaswal, *HP.* p. 84; (d) A. S. Altekar, *SGAI.*, p. 26; (e) V. M. Apte in *The Vedic Age*, p. 352.

as writes Dr. Bandyopadhyaya) as their king for successful fight against the Asuras. But another story in the same work mentions the election of the divine king Indra in more general terms as being "the mightiest, the most powerful, the strongest, the most real and the best to accomplish". According to still other traditions the divine king was created by the will of the Supreme Deity. It follows from the above that the Vedic evidence is not unanimous about the evolution of the king from the successful military chieftain, or about the origin of kingship in warfare. As for the Anglo-Saxon analogy quoted by Bandyopadhyaya, it may be pointed out that recent research has definitely proved kingship to have existed at least among the Angles long before their migration into Britain. Jayaswal's suggestion that the Indo-Aryans borrowed their institution of kingship from the Dravidians, which is based no doubt upon his view of the equivalence of the gods and the demons in the *Altareya Brāhmaṇa* story to their human counterparts, involves a number of unproved assumptions. These are, firstly, that in pre-Aryan times the Dravidians had kings, secondly, that the aborigines with whom the Aryans came in contact belonged to the Dravidian stock, and, thirdly, that the Indo-Aryans with their known aversion to the aborigines did not hesitate to borrow one of their most cherished institutions from the latter. As regards the view of the origin of kingship out of the patriarchal society, it is simply a revival of an older theory started by Zimmer and rejected by later scholars. Of any kind of patriarchal authority exercised by the Vedic king over his subjects there is hardly any trace. On the other hand the connexion of the Vedic word for king (*rājan*) with cognate Indo-European terms suggests its origin in remote antiquity.²

Let us next consider the status of the Vedic king. Dr. Bandyopadhyaya (*op.cit.*, Part I pp. 86, 96f, 125f), in the course of his elaborate account of the evolution of this institution, observes that the early Vedic king was prevented from establishing autocracy by "the pre-eminence of the ruling clan", and the existence of the people as "a powerful and dominant factor". "A new phase of political evolution," he continues, was heralded by the later Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*. The monarchy was "established on a firm footing" due to "the influence of sacerdotalism" (of which the germs are found in the *Rigveda* and still more the *Atharvaveda* coronation hymns), the rise of "an aristocracy of blood and service" devoted to the king's service, and "the gradual decay of popular control of the administrative machinery". "Neverthe-

² Vedic theories of the origin of divine kingship:—*AB.* I 14: VIII 12, *TB.* II 2. 7. 2; *ibid* II 2. 10. 1f; *JB.* III 152. These theories are fully discussed in the author's forthcoming work, *A History of Indian Political Ideas* (Oxford University Press). Vide also *HPL*, Part I, p. 8n. On kingship among the Anglo-Saxons, vide Hodg-

kin, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, Vol. I, p. 215. Zimmer's theory (*Alt. Leben*, p. 162) of the origin of Vedic monarchy is discussed by the authors of *Vedic Index*, s.v. *rājan*. On cognate terms for *rājan* in the Indo-European languages, vide *PTS. Dictionary*, s.v. *rājan*.

less, the tendency to irresponsibility was fully checked, first, by the priests who exercised great influence, and secondly by the popular bodies who always asserted their rights carefully safeguarded" in the king's coronation-oath exacted by the priests. "The king thus became a constitutional monarch only exercising authority limited by the law." Jayaswal's view of the status of the Vedic king (*op.cit.*, pp 211-12) is conveyed to us in his summing up of the constitutional significance of the ceremonies of the royal consecration in the period of the later Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*. "Hindu" (read Vedic) kingship, he observes in a series of short statements, "was a human institution", and it was "elective" with the whole people forming the electorate: it was "a contractual engagement", "an office of State" co-operating with other offices: it was "a trust" for the purpose of "tending the country to prosperity and growth": it was "expressly not arbitrary", and it was "not above the law, but under it", it was "primarily national and secondarily territorial". According to Dr. Altekar (*op.cit.*, pp 75-6, 82-3, 93), the Vedic king's powers at first were limited, because he was only "the seniormost member in the council of peers", and he often owed his position to real or formal election, while the popular 'council' (otherwise called 'assembly') functioned at the capital. The popular assembly of the Vedic Age, the *samiti*, we are told in another context, probably functioned as a constitutional check upon the king. But gradually the king's powers and privileges increased as the State became territorial in character and extensive in size, while "the powers of the patriarchal barons like the *kulapatis* and *viśpatis*" as well as of the popular *samitis* declined. In the early Vedic period, according to the same author, the kings were elected in some cases in the sense that "the leaders" of the people "like the *kulapatis* and the *viśpatis*" alone had a voice in the election, while the people at the most ratified their choice. But the monarchy became "normally hereditary" long before the later Vedic period.

We shall now proceed to examine one after another the views of the scholars quoted above. Dr. Bandyopadhyaya's long and somewhat confused description consists of two parts, one relating to the limitation of the early Vedic king's personal rule or autocracy by aristocratic and popular elements, and the other to his transformation into a well-established constitutional monarch in later times. As for the first part, although *Ṛv.* X 40.3 compares princes (*rājaputras*) with the divine *Aśvins*, none of the *Av.* texts quoted by the author indicate "the vested rights of the princes" as a factor preventing the king's autocracy. Thus *Av.* I 9.3 conveying the poet's prayer to set the king in supremacy over his kinsmen (*sajāta*) has been taken by Zimmer, probably rightly, to illustrate his third type of Vedic polity, which for want of a better name we may call 'dynastic government'. Again *Av.* I 29-30 referring to the constant enmity of brothers or outsiders and *ibid* III 4 mentioning kinsmen meeting the king are too vague to be of any help. *Av.* III 5. 6-7,

conveying a newly consecrated king's prayer to a wooden amulet to make as his subjects "all people round about" comprising specifically clever chariot-makers, skilful metal-workers, "the royal king-makers", the *sūtas* and the *grāmaṇīs*, does not warrant the conclusion that "the kinsmen of the king together with a number of other important personages had formed a body of men who selected the ruling prince and probably guided his conduct." As for the passages quoted by the author to prove his case for the "powerful and dominant" popular factor, although the relevant texts (*Rv.* X 124.8, 173.1, *Av.* III 4.2 etc.) were long ago explained by Zimmer (who was followed in part by Bloomfield) to refer to the king's election by the *viś* (clan or canton), the crucial passage (*Av.* III 4.2) was interpreted by Geldner to mean not the election of the king by the *viś* but his acceptance by the subjects. The question, therefore, must be regarded as still open. Again while *Rv.* X 173.1 (= *Av.* VI 87-88) is translated by the author himself as "May the people all like (welcome) you," neither *Av.* VII 94 (praying to Indra to make the *viśas* "like-minded, wholly ours"), nor *Av.* VI 73.1 or 3 (enjoining the subjects to be like-minded and loyal to the king), suffices to prove that the people "asserted themselves whenever the king was in the wrong". While the author's arguments for proving the people to be "a powerful and dominant factor" are so weak, he fails altogether to refer to the testimony of the early Vedic texts to the king's high dignity and supreme authority. This is indicated by the frequent application of the title *rājan* (king) to the great gods, the repeated use of similes about kingship in relation to the gods, and the technical terms (*rājya*, *rāshṭra* and above all *kshatra*) expressive of the king's dominion or authority. The essence of the king's authority, namely the subjection of the people to his rule, is clearly brought out in such passages as *Rv.* IV 42 1-2 (where Varuṇa declares that the *rāshṭra* belongs to him and that the gods obey his will), and *ibid* IV 50.8 (where the fact of the people themselves submitting to a king is mentioned among the blessings attending him). It follows from the above that there is no justification for the author's view of the early Vedic period as representing "the simple political ideal of the king elected by the people and governing according to their wishes". The author indeed contradicts himself in the same context by saying of the early Vedic king that he was "the sole repository of the executive power" with the *sabhā* acting as "the advisory body" and the *samiti* meeting "to express the popular approval of acts either mooted to it for acceptance, or to join in State ceremonies".³

Coming to the second part of the author's argument we have to state

³ Ref. to discussions of Vedic texts:—
(a) *Av.* I 9.3 (Zimmer, *Alt. Leben*, p. 176); (b) *Av.* III 5. 6-7 (vide chapter XII below); (c) *Rv.* X 124.8 etc. (Zimmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-65, Bloomfield, *SBE*, XLIII, 336, Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, II 303, *HPL* Part I,

p. 17. Geldner, (*Der Rig-Veda*, p. 396) translates the relevant passage in *Rv.* X 173.1 as "alle Clane sollen dich wünschen." On the high authority of the king in *Rv.* and *Av.*, vide *HPL* pp. 11-12, 33-34.

that his reference to the factors helping to establish the monarchy on "a firm footing" and investing the king with "a constitutional position," does not bear the test of scrutiny. The genesis of the later ideas of the king's divinity, as the author himself admits, may be traced back to passages in the coronation hymns of the *Rigveda* and still more in the *Atharvaveda*. It is likely enough (as we have suggested elsewhere) that the later Vedic period saw the rise of *rājapūtras* and *rājanyas* forming two grades of nobles, as well as of the *sūtas*, *grāmaṇīs* and the *kshatṛīs*, *saṃgrahīṭīs* apparently constituting the first and the second grade of the kingly officers. Further we have seen in the preceding chapter how representatives of the last four classes as well as the *senānī* (military-commander) along with the Chief Queen (or Queens) and the chief priest are included in lists of *ratnins* ('jewel-holders') at whose houses the king makes offerings at the *Rājasūya* ceremony. It has further been shown how the king's brother, son and Chief Queen as well as his domestic chaplain (*purohita*) along with the *sūta* and the *grāmaṇī*, the *kshatṛī* and the *saṃgrahīṭī* are included in a *Brāhmaṇa* text (PB XIX 1.4) in a list of eight *vīras* ("persons of distinction") who together sustain the kingship. But the germs of this aristocracy, if it can be called by that name, may be traced back to the king's clients or dependants (*ibhas* or *ibhyas*, *upastis* or *stis*) of the *Rigveda* and the *Atharvaveda*. What little foundation exists for the author's view that the above factors helped to establish monarchy on a firm footing is proved not only by the indirect evidence of the *Yajus Samhitā* and *Brahmaṇa* texts regarding rites for restoring expelled kings, but also by direct statements in the *Brāhmaṇas*. Indeed nothing is more characteristic of the *Brāhmaṇas* than their absence of fixed ideas about the king's status in relation to his subjects. Thus while many passages in these works indicate the *Brāhmaṇa*'s superiority to the Kshatriya, other texts assert the equivalence of these powers, and a few even assert the superiority of the Kshatriya over the *Brāhmaṇa*. Again, the *Yajus Samhitā* texts refer to rites by which the priest can manipulate the sacrifice so as to destroy or weaken the *kshatṛa* by the *viś*, and vice versa. Even if it were true that the king at this period acquired well-defined functions and duties formally vested in him rather than subsisting on the mere personal relation between him and his subjects, there is no evidence to suggest his transformation into a constitutional monarch only exercising authority limited by the law; for we have to remember that the comprehensive scheme of law (*dharma*) laying down the duties of the constituent units of the social system including the king, is found for the first time in the *Dharmasūtras* or the early *Smṛitis*. As for the great influence of the priests nothing is more characteristic of the late as of the early Vedic texts than the striking contrast between the high pretensions of the priestly order and the actual pleas for its elementary rights of person and property. Finally as regards the alleged influence of the popular body, it is contradicted by the author's own admission of the gradual

decay of "the popular control over the administrative machinery". Indeed, of the two great popular assemblies of the early Vedic period the *samiti*, as we have endeavoured to show elsewhere, disappears at this period from our view, while the *sabhā* is gradually transformed into the king's court and Privy Council. How the "coronation-oath" at the ceremony of Indra's consecration of the earthly king (*AB* VIII 5) has no bearing on the relation between the king and his subjects but is intended exclusively for the benefit of the officiating priest, has been shown in the preceding chapter.⁴

Coming to Dr. Jayaswal's interpretation of the status of the king in the light of the late Vedic ceremonies of royal consecration, we may repeat here from the preceding chapter some of our arguments for differing from his principal conclusions. The Vedic kingship, it is true, was conceived to be a human institution in the sense that the royal sacrificer's human parentage is pointedly mentioned in an invocation-formula at the *Rājasūya*, but the king was simultaneously held to be equivalent to the deities by virtue of his participation in the sacrifice. Jayaswal's statement that the king was elected by the whole people rests upon a misapprehension of his status before the consecration. So also his view that the kingship was 'a contractual engagement' and 'an office of State' and that the king was 'under the law', is founded upon a misunderstanding of the scope of the oath exacted by the officiating priest at a ceremony of royal consecration. Again, the argument that the kingship was "a trust" is based upon the unwarranted interpretation of the concluding portion of a formula used at the *Vājapeya* sacrifice in the ritualistic texts. It remains to mention that the reference to Vedic kingship as primarily 'national' and secondarily territorial is a misnomer, the fact being that the monarchy which was originally of a tribal character tended to become a territorial one in the late Vedic period.

Dr. Altekar's interpretation of Vedic kingship is open to exception on the following grounds. Firstly, it is true that the early Vedic social organisation was based on the division of the tribe (*jana*) into a number of clans or cantons (*viś*) and of the latter into families (*kula*). But the texts know nothing of the constitutional powers of the heads of *kulas* and *viśas* so as to justify the author's description of the king as "only

⁴ Refs. to rites for restoration of expelled kings are *TS*. II 1.4.7 and II 3.1, *AB*. VIII 10, *PB*. XVIII 5.5-6, those to rites for destroying or weakening the Kshatriya power are *MS*. III 3.10, IV 6.8, *KS*. XXI 10. For refs. to mutual relations of Brāhmanas and Kshatriyas, vide *TS*. II 6.2.5, *AB*. VIII 1.4; *ibid* 9 *PB* XI 1.2 (Brāhmana's superiority), *TS*. V 1.10.2, *AB*. VII 22 (equivalence of Brāhmana and Kshatriya), *SB*. V 4.2.7; *TS* II 5.10.1 (Kshatriya's superiority). For a pointed ref. to instability

of Kshatriya's power, vide *KB*. XVI 4 which gives us in the usual form of dogmatic exposition of the ritual the author's answer to the question, 'Why are the Brāhmanas and the Kshatriyas unstable, the Viś stable?' Vide *HPL*, pp. 21, 40, 101, 104, 110 (position of *ibhas* and *upastis*, *rājaputras* and *rājanyas*, *sūtas* and *gramanīs*, etc.), *ibid* pp. 23-24, 44-45, 144-50, 159 (immunities and privileges of the Brāhmanas), *ibid* pp. 118-22 (status of *sabhā* and *samiti* in later Vedic period).

the seniormost member in the council of peers". Secondly, though a few Vedic texts (as we have observed above) have been taken to refer to the election of kings by the *vis*, there is no evidence that the heads of the families and clans had at first the sole voice in the election, with the *vis* functioning as the ratifying authority. Thirdly, the later Vedic period undoubtedly saw the increase of the king's authority of which the causes or symptoms were the formation of comparatively large States, the change from the tribal to the territorial organisation of society, and the decline of the *samiti*, the Popular Assembly *par excellence*, of the earlier times. But there is no corresponding reference to the decline of the constitutional powers, if any, of the heads of the families and clans. That the position of the later Vedic king in spite of the increase in his authority and functions was still unstable and subject to the paramount authority of divine law and custom, has been shown in another place.

We may sum up the results of the foregoing discussion in the following way. *Firstly*, neither the Vedic evidence nor the historical analogy justifies the conclusion that kingship arose among the Vedic Aryans exclusively under the stress of war with their Dravidian or other enemies. Equally unwarranted is the conclusion that it was developed out of the partriarchal organisation of the Vedic society. The true origin of Vedic kingship should probably be sought in the military or other necessities of the people in pre-Vedic times. *Secondly*, the view that the authority of the Vedic king was at first checked by the influence of the princes and the people and was afterwards invested with a constitutional character in spite of its establishment on a firm footing is repeatedly contradicted by the texts and vitiated by its inconsistencies. Again the ritual texts of the great ceremonies of royal and imperial consecration in the later Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* do not justify the view that kingship was an entirely human institution dependent on election by the whole people, or that it was 'a contractual engagement' or that it was held to be 'a trust'. There is again no warrant for the view that the heads of families and clans in the early period had the sole voice in the election of kings, and that their power suffered a decline in the later times. Vedic kingship in fact while enjoying high dignity and authority from the first, acquired higher authority and dignity in the later period, but it still remained subject to the older conceptions of the paramount authority of Divine law and custom.⁵

B. The Popular Assemblies

Let us now turn to the recent discussions regarding the origin, constitution and functions of the Vedic Popular Assemblies, especially the *samiti* and the *sabhā*. The *samiti*, according to Dr. N.C. Bandyopadhyaya, was "a gathering of the whole folk of the community," "the assembly

⁵ For a fuller discussion of the origin of the Vedic king as well as of his

status and functions, vide *HPL*. pp. 4-6, 8-12, 17, 31-34, 53-62 and 91-96.

of the *rāshtra*: "it had a close connexion with the royal person and met on all important occasions like royal coronation in times of war and national calamity": it was "probably convened to elect and accept the king or to approve of his acts". The *sabhā*, according to the same author, was at first "an association of kinsfolk", but later became also "an association of men bound together either by ties of blood or local contiguity": it was a central aristocratic gathering associated with the king and may as such be called "the Political Council": it was "the advisory body of the king": it likewise acted as "a judicial assembly". More original than the above are the views of Dr. K. P. Jayaswal. The *samiti*, he thinks, was "the National Assembly of the whole people". Though "the whole people were considered to be present in the *samiti*", it was actually constituted on "the principle of representation", the village forming the basis of its constitution at least in later times. The *samiti* was "a sovereign body" as it could elect as well as re-elect the king: it discussed matters of State: it was the king's duty to attend the *samiti*. The *sabhā* like the *samiti* was "a popular body": it was probably "a standing and stationary body of selected men working under the authority of the *samiti*. It clearly acted as "the national judicature": it had the right of free discussions and its resolutions were held to be "binding and inviolable". From its late mention in the *Rigveda*, its developed stage of debate and its office of President, the author concludes that the *samiti* belonged to the developed, and not the early, Vedic Age. From the fact that the *sabhā* in its constitutional sense occurs in a late Vedic text (Rv. X 71.10) he further infers that like the *samiti* it arose in the later period of the *Rigveda*. The *vidatha*, the author lastly suggests, was "the parent folk-assembly from which the *samiti*, the *sabhā* and the *senā* were differentiated" in later times.

We may quote in the next place the views of two other scholars on the present question. Though the *samiti*, says Dr. Altekar, sometimes meant a social gathering, it usually stood for "a Political Assembly of the Central Government". It exercised, though in an indeterminate manner, "considerable control over military and executive affairs of the central government". It "probably consisted of the heads of the few prominent aristocratic and military families" in the community. As regards the *sabhā*, "the balance of the available evidence", according to the author, proves that it was usually the village assembly meeting for social as well as political purposes. Turning to the view of Dr. V. M. Apte we find him stating that although the *sabhā* and the *samiti* in the *Rigveda* are difficult to distinguish, the *samiti* may provisionally be said to have been "an assembly of larger groups of people for the discharge of tribal (i.e. political) business", while the *sabhā* was "a more select body, less popular and political in character". The functions and powers of the two bodies, he further observes, cannot be exactly defined, but both exercised considerable authority and acted as healthy checks on the king's power. In the age of the later Vedic *Samhitās*, we are further

told, the functions of the *sabhā* and the *samiti* cannot be clearly distinguished. Nevertheless it may be said that the main business of the *samiti* consisted in "discussion and decision on policy of all kinds as well as legislation", while "judicial work fell chiefly within the purview of the *sabhā*." The *samiti*, however, could transact judicial work just as the *sabhā* had likewise the right to discuss political matters.⁶

We may discuss the above views under the following heads:

I. Origin of the *sabhā* and the *samiti*

As regards Jayaswal's arguments for stating the *samiti* to have been the product of a developed Vedic age, we have to observe that while its right of free discussion doubtless marks out the *samiti* to be different from the primitive folk-assemblies of the Teutonic peoples, the text (*Pāraskara-Grihyasūtra* III 13. 1) quoted by the author (*op. cit.*, p. 15) refers to the lord (*iśāna*) not of the *samiti* but of the *parishat* (identified in the text itself with the *sabhā*), this personage being probably identical with the *sabhāpati* mentioned in the *Śatarudriya* text of the *Yajus Samhitās*. Jayaswal's suggestion (*op. cit.*, p. 20) that the *vidatha* was the parent folk-assembly from which the *sabhā*, *samiti* and *senā* differentiated in later times is supported by the high authority of Roth, who attributed to it civil and military as well as religious functions. While, however, Ludwig and Zimmer agree with Roth in taking *vidatha* at least in the derivative sense of 'assembly', Oldenberg, Geldner and Bloomfield interpret it as 'sacrifice' at least in a derivative sense. Even within the first group of scholars there is room for considerable difference of opinion; for unlike Roth, Ludwig held it to mean primarily the assembly of Maghavas and Brāhmaṇas, while Zimmer took it to be a smaller assembly than the *samiti*. In view of these differences it seems impossible to predicate any certain attribute of the Vedic *vidatha*. Finally, as regards Dr. Bandyopadhyaya's view of the extreme antiquity of the *sabhā*, we may point out that the author's comparison of the *sabhā* with "I E. *sebh-ā*" and with the cognate forms "O.E. *sibb.*, Ger. *sippe*, Goth. *sibja*" needs correction as follows:—"Cf. *I.E.s(u)e-bho and the related forms O.E. *sib(b)*, O.H.G. *sipp(e)a*, Goth. *sibja* and Mod. German *sippe*."⁷

⁶ Current views of the origin, constitution and functions of the *sabhā* and the *samiti*:—(a) Bandyopadhyaya, *op.cit.*, pp. 110-18; (b) Jayaswal, *op.cit.*, pp. 12-20; (c) Altekar, *op.cit.*, pp. 130-35; (d) V. M. Apte in *The Vedic Age*, pp. 352-54, 429.

⁷ The text of *Pāraskara-Grihyasūtra* III 13.1 is as follows:—*athātaḥ sabhā-praveśanam/sabhām-abhyeti.....atha praviśati...parshadametya japed...asyāḥ parshada iśānaḥ sahasā suduṣṭaro jana iti*. In the above *parshadam* is

explained by the commentator Jayarāma as *sabhām*. Interpretations of *vidatha*:—(a) Ludwig, *Rv. tr.*, III p. 259f; (b) Zimmer, *Alt. Leben*, p. 177; (c) Oldenberg, *S.B.E.*, Vol. 46, p. 26; (d) Bloomfield, *JAOS.*, Vol. 19, p. 12f. The Indo-European affinities of the word *sabhā* are discussed by Otto Schrader, *Reallexikon der Indo-Germanischen Altertumskunde*, s. v. *Volksversammlung*. Also vide *PTS. Dictionary* s. v. *sabhā*.

II. Composition of the *samiti* and the *sabhā*

The view that the *samiti* in the political sense was the folk-assembly of the Indo-Aryan people, while the *sabhā* was a more select body is in accordance with the consensus of opinion among scholars. In view of the tribal structure of the R̥gvedic society, however, it is a misnomer to call the *samiti* with Jayaswal (*op.cit.*, p. 12) "the national assembly of the whole people". Equally unfortunate is Dr. Altekar's characterisation of the *samiti* (*op. cit.*, pp. 142-43) as "the Political Assembly at (*sic*) the Central Government" in contrast with the *sabhā* "which was the village assembly", since there is clear evidence that both the assemblies were attended by the king. Jayaswal's statement (*op. cit.*, p. 13) that the *samiti* was attended by the king repeats the arguments and conclusion of Zimmer, although he derives from one of the texts (*Rv.* IX 92.6) the further inference that it was the king's duty to do so. Another text (*Rv.* X 97.6) quoted by Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 13, n 6) which uses the simile of kings in a *samiti*, however, was interpreted by Zimmer to refer to a type of constitution similar to what prevailed in Ancient Germany as described by Tacitus. In this constitution there was no single head in times of peace, the members of the ruling house exercising power equally. Jayaswal (*op.cit.*, p. 15) breaks new ground by suggesting that the composition of the *samiti* was based on the principle of representation with the village as its unit. But his arguments do not appear to be very convincing. *Firstly*, the statement that the *grāmaṇi* functioning at the *ratnahavīmshi* ('jewel-offering') ceremony of the *Rājasūya* was a "representative persona" is at best a hypothesis; for it is equally probable that he belonged to the village or city where the royal residence was situated. *Secondly*, in the *Av.* passage (XII 1.56) quoted by the author *saṃgrāma* and *samiti* are not in apposition so as to justify Jayaswal's rendering of the former term as 'the assembled *samitis*,' but in juxtaposition with each other. *Thirdly*, the Vedic references to the village as a collective unit do not necessarily imply a Folk-assembly consisting of local representatives like the Anglo-Saxon Folk-moot. *Fourthly*, Jayaswal referring to a CU story (where Śvetaketu is said to have gone to the *samiti* of the Pañchālas) considers it "hardly probable that the whole nation without any principle of representation would be actually present" "where philosophers and statesmen were sitting". But was not the Athenian Ecclesia, which in its days of glory was attended by Themistocles and Pericles, an assembly of the whole people? Is there, again, any reason to suspect that the R̥gvedic States normally were larger in size than the Athenian State in Pericles's time? As regards the *sabhā*, Jayaswal's statement (*op.cit.*, p. 18) that it was the standing and stationary body of selected men working under the authority of the *samiti* is hardly supported by any evidence. The author merely refers to what he thinks to be the literal significance of the term ("a body of men shining together"), and to the Vedic allusions to their being objects of special respect.

The other views of the composition of the *samiti* and the *sabhā* call for little comment. Dr. Bandyopadhyaya's identification of the *samiti* with the *saṃgati* of *Rv.*, X 141.4 was anticipated long ago by Ludwig whose view was accepted by the authors of the *Vedic Index*. But the author's further identification of *samiti* with *saṃgrāma* (the folk-in-arms), though supported by quotations from Yāska and Sāyaṇa, is contradicted by two *Av.* texts (XII 1.56 and XV 9. 2-3) distinguishing *sabhā*, *samiti* and *saṃgrāma* as separate, though evidently associated bodies. Even if we assume with the author that the *sabhā* was a central aristocratic gathering associated with the king, his comparison of its evolution with that of "the Teutonic Council of Chiefs, the Roman Senate and the Anglo-Saxon Witenagemot" is singularly unfortunate; for it is a well-known fact that while the Witenagemot was an offshoot of the Folk-moot, neither the Teutonic Council of Princes described by Tacitus nor the Roman Senate had a popular origin. When the author further quotes *SB.* "II 5.14" (a slip for III 4.14) and *CU.V* 3.6 and VIII 14.1 to prove in opposition to Zimmer the intimate connexion of the *sabhā* with king, he forgets to refer to the significance of the epithet *sabhāpati* occurring in the *Yajus* texts showing that the connexion of the *sabhā* with the king had become indirect even in the *Brāhmaṇa* period, while he fails to make allowance for the late date of the *Upanishad* passage.⁸

III. Functions of the *samiti* and the *sabhā*

As regards Jayaswal's argument (*op.cit.*, p. 12) that the election of the king was "the most important business of the *samiti*", we have stated above that Geldner takes the crucial passage (*Av.* III 4.2) to refer not to the election of the king by the clan or the canton, but to his acceptance by the subjects. *Rv.* X 191.3 quoted by Jayaswal (which is repeated with variants in *Av.* VI 64) contains a poet's prayer for a common counsel, a common *samiti* and a common mind and united thought, while similarly *Rv.* X 166.4 makes a king say in course of a prayer for the destruction of his rival that he has mastered their thought, their holy work and their *samiti*. These passages tend generally to show that the *samiti* was sufficiently important to make its support a great asset to the king. The two *Av.* texts (V 19.15 and VI 88.3) have the same general significance. In *Av.* VII 12 and VIII 10.5 further we have a more or less clear reference to the *samiti*'s function of deliberation on public affairs: in the first passage the mystical abstraction *virāt* is said to have successively ascended and descended in the *sabhā*, the *samiti* and the *āmantraṇa* (translated as 'concentration personified' by Griffith and as 'address' by Whitney and Lanman), while in the second passage

⁸ Refs: (a) Zimmer, *Alt. Lebēn*, p. 176, (b) Ludwig, *Rv. tr.*, III p. 253 (c) VI s. v. The composition of the Vedic

samiti and *sabhā* is discussed with full refs. in *HPL* pp. 26-27, 45-46, 118-21.

the poet, after praying to the *samiti* and the *sabhā* "the two daughters of Prajāpati" for their concurrent aid, asks that he "may speak what is pleasant among those that have come together (*saṃgatah*), that all the *sabhāsads* of the *sabhā* may be of the like speech with him and give up their splendour and their discernment (*viññāna*) to himself, that he may be the possessor of the fortune of the whole gathering (*saṃsad*)" and so forth. As an additional argument in favour of the high functions of the Vedic popular assemblies we may quote ŚB. VII 1.1.4 which suggests that the king's gift of the land of the Folk (or the State) with the consent of the people was held to be in accordance with the tribal or the customary law, although this land was sometimes arbitrarily disposed of by the sole authority of the ruler. Nevertheless there is not sufficient evidence to prove that the *samiti* was "the sovereign assembly of Vedic times" (Jayaswal), or that it "met on all important occasions" (Bandyopadhyaya), or that it "exercised considerable control over the military and executive affairs of the State" (Altekar), or that it "decided all questions of policy" (Apte), while the reference (Apte) to its alleged right of legislation is a lamentable historical anachronism.⁹

As regards the parallel institution of the *sabhā* Jayaswal's argument (*op.cit.*, p. 18) for considering its resolution to be "binding on all and inviolable" rests upon his interpretation of a single *Av.* text (VII 12.2). Here the poet addressing the *sabhā* as *narishṭā* prays that all those that sit assembled therein may utter speech in harmony with him. Rejecting the translation of *narishṭā* as 'mirth' by Bloomfield and as 'sport' by Whitney and Lanman, Jayaswal renders it after the commentator Sāyaṇa as "a resolution of many that cannot be broken or violated". Now in the first place the context shows that the *Av.* verse quoted above applies especially to the *sabhā* in contrast with the preceding verse which is addressed jointly to the *sabhā* and the *samiti*. If, as Jayaswal thinks, the *samiti* was the sovereign body in the State, it is inconceivable that the binding and inviolable character of its resolutions should be held in the above passage to be the exclusive attribute of the *sabhā*.¹⁰ Second-

⁹ The text of ŚB. VII. 1.1.4 quoted above is thus translated by Eggeling:—"To whomsoever the Kshatriya with the approval of the *viś* grants a settlement, that is properly given." (For its interpretation as above, vide the author's work *The Agrarian System in Ancient India*, p. 83). For a complete discussion of the functions of the Vedic *samiti*, vide *HPL*, pp. 27, 46-48.

¹⁰ The *Av.* passage (VII 12.2) in the original is as follows:—*vidma te sahhe nāma narishṭā nāma vā asi*. It is thus translated by Bloomfield (*SBE.*, Vol. XLII, p. 138):—"We know thy name, O assembly, Mirth verily is thy name", and by Whitney and Lanman

(*HOS.*, Vol. 18, p. 391) as "We know thy name, O assembly, verily sport by name art thou." These translations are explained and justified in a note kindly written for this work by my friend Pandit Kshitish Chandra Chattopadhyaya, M.A. (lately of the Calcutta University Post-Graduate Department). This note is as follows:—"Narishṭā is a peculiar word found in the *Av.* That its etymology was early forgotten is clear from the fact that it occurs as *narishṭā* in the *Vaj. Sam.* The accent in the second syllable would seem to preclude the *taddhita* suffix *ishṭhan*, as also the idea of *nañ-tatpurusha*. The only way,

ly, in the corresponding verse of the *Paippalāda* recension of the *Av.* the *sabhā* is addressed as *subhadrā* and *sarasvatī* which is nearer the interpretation of *narishṭā* as 'mirth' and 'sport' than as an inviolable resolution. Thirdly, in the late Vedic texts giving a list of symbolical victims at the *Purushamedha* ('the human sacrifice') *Bhīmala* (explained by the commentator as *bhayaṅkarai* i.e. the terrible) is significantly enough dedicated to *narishṭā*.¹¹

Turning to another point we have to state that the view of the authors quoted above relating to the judicial functions of the *sabhā* repeats the conclusions of previous scholars along with some of their arguments. It, therefore, seems desirable to discuss this view at some length. Firstly, as regards *Rv.* X 71.10 the term *kilvishasprī* applied to one who is victorious in the *sabhā* is rendered by Jayaswal (*op.cit.*, p. 19) as 'free from blame,' but it was interpreted more fully by Ludwig (*Rv.tr.* III p. 26) long ago to refer to the remover of the blame of the slain fastened on somebody through accusation. Secondly, *sabhāchāra* ('one attending the assembly') who is dedicated to *dharma* (justice) in the list of symbolical victims at the *Purushamedha* sacrifice is taken by the authors of the *Vedic Index* to mean assessors deciding legal cases. We have, however, elsewhere (*H.P.L.* p. 48) suggested, in view of the total absence of reference to assessors in the Vedas, that the term corresponds to *sabhāsad* of the *Av.* texts meaning a member of the king's court of justice. Thirdly, in so far as the set of parallel passages in *Yajus Samhitās* (*VS.* III 45, *XX* 17; *TS.* I 8.3.1; *MS.* I 10.2; *KS.* IX 4) containing the prayer by a royal sacrificer and his wife for expiation of "the wrong done in village or forest, in the *sabhā*, in the *indriyas*" and so forth, Ludwig (*Rv. tr.* III p. 254) held the *sabhā* to mean 'a court' and Zimmer (*Alt. Leben*, pp. 172-74) 'a court deciding the local suits,' while Eggeling (*SBE.* Vol. XII p. 398n) suggested that the wrong in question might refer to gambling and other non-political activities of the *sabhā*. We have, however, elsewhere (*H.P.L.* pp. 26, 48-49, 119-22) pointed out that the solemnity and comprehensiveness of the penitential formula given above, best accord with the political activities of the royal pair in the *sabhā* functioning probably as the king's council as well as court. Fourthly and lastly, on the authority of *Pāraskara-Grihyasūtra* III 13 styling the *sabhā* as *nādiḥ* and *tvishiḥ* and the explanation of the last two terms by the old Indian commentator Jayarāma and by Oldenberg¹², Jayaswal holds that the *sabhā* was a

therefore, open to us is to regard it as a *bahuvrīhi* of *na* and *rishta*. It is not analysed in the *Pada* text of either school, though the *Prātiśākhya* of each school notes this. Western scholars generally connect the word with *Skt. narma* and German *Narr* and hold it to mean 'merriment', 'sport'—a sense supported by the context in which it is found. Śāyana's explanation of the word in the *Av.*

is doubtful, as both the accent and the feminine form appear to be irregular in the case of a *tatpurusha* compound with *nāḥ*."

¹¹ The *Av.* text in the *Paippalāda* recension is as follows:—*Veda vai sabhe te nāma subhadrā si sarasvatī*. For the symbolical victims at the *Purushamedha*, vide *VS.* XXX 6. *TB.* III. 4.2.1.

¹² The two terms *nādiḥ* and *tvishiḥ* applied to *sabhā* in *PGS.* quoted

court. But the terms, as we have suggested elsewhere (*H.P.L.* p. 122) might equally refer to disputes in the king's council. We have suggested elsewhere (*H.P.L.* pp. 48 and 119-21) that the *Atharvaveda* passage XIX 55 points to the emergence of the *sabhā* as a narrow royal council and court by the side of the larger popular assembly of the *samiti*, while the text of the *Yujus-Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* (*T.S.* VII 1.8, *V.S.* XXII 22, *S.B.* XIII 1.9.8 etc.) indicate more or less definitely the transformation of the *sabhā* into such a restricted body.

We may conclude this discussion by quoting a short extract from one of our previous works to illustrate the necessity of extreme caution in drawing general conclusions about the constitutional significance of the Ancient Popular Assemblies. In the parallel instance of the Anglo-Saxon Council, we wrote, intensive research has recently shown that notwithstanding instances of dependance of individual kings on popular support, its functions were apparently of a deliberative character. Indeed frequent instances of expulsion or murder of kings suggests that the Council had no constitutional means of enforcing its wishes against royalty. As regards the Council's alleged right of electing the king, it has been shown that after the tenth century the royal succession followed in the overwhelming majority of known instances, the election phrase notwithstanding, the ordinary system of primogeniture. In the few instances of actual election it amounted to mere recognition on the part of the chief men of the kingdom individually. In Bede's time the succession was not left to election, but was settled beforehand by the reigning king."¹³

Let us sum up the results of the preceding series of discussions. It is not possible in the present state of our knowledge clearly to trace the origin of the two popular Assemblies of the Vedic Aryans, namely, the *samiti* and the *sabhā*. It may, however, be argued on the evidence of comparative philology that the *sabhā* (or at any rate its equivalent) goes back to Indo-European times. As regards the composition and functions of the two assemblies all that can be correctly predicated of them is that the *samiti* was the Folk-assembly *par excellence* of the Vedic Aryans and occupied as such a position of sufficient importance to make it the king's most valuable asset, that the parallel assembly of the *sabhā* which enjoyed equal prestige tended at an early period to be narrowed down into the king's council and court, and finally that both the assemblies enjoyed the right of debate. On the other hand the statements that the *samiti* was a representative body based upon the village unit, and that the *sabhā* was a standing body of selected men

above are explained by Jayarāma, vide M. G. Bakre's edition of *Pāraskara-Grihyasūtra with Jayarama's commentary* pp. 392-93, to mean respectively *nadanaśilā* ('sounding') and *dīptā* ('shining'). They have been translated by Oldenberg (*SBE.* Vol. XXIX

p. 362) as 'trouble' and 'vehemence' respectively.

¹³ Vide *HPL.* pp. 28-9 quoting R. Munro Chadwick, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Institutions, Excursus IV* ("The functions of the Council especially with reference to the election of kings".)

working under its authority, that the *samiti* was the sovereign body, that it met on all important occasions, that it exercised considerable influence over the military and political affairs of the State, and that it decided all questions of policy, are more or less of a speculative character.

character.

CHAPTER XI

THE ANCIENT INDIAN REPUBLICAN AND MIXED CONSTITUTIONS FROM THE SIXTH CENTURY B.C. TO THE THIRD CENTURY A.D.—A CRITICAL STUDY

A. Some general characteristics of the Indian republics.

Although communities of “free”, “autonomous”, or “independent” Indians living in the Indus valley during the last quarter of the fourth century B.C. have been known to Indologists for long from references by the Greek classical writers of Alexander’s Indian campaign, intensive discussions of the characteristics of Ancient Indian republics by Indian scholars have come into the picture only during the last thirty years. We may consider this point under the following heads.

1. Significance of the technical terms *saṃgha* and *gaṇa*

According to a well-known aphorism (III 3.86) of Pāṇini (c. 600 B.C.) the word-form *saṃgha* (formed irregularly unlike the regular form *saṃghāta*) is synonymous with *gaṇa* (an old Vedic word meaning ‘a group’ or ‘a company’). The *saṃgha* (along with its varieties) is illustrated by Pāṇini and his school of grammarians as well as in the Pali canonical works, the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and so forth. The significance of these terms has been explained differently by different scholars ever since the late Dr. Jayaswal cleared the ground by finally disproving their earlier interpretation as ‘tribe’. According to Dr. D.R. Bhandarkar the terms *saṃgha* and *gaṇa* in Pāṇini mean “a combination of individuals formed for a definite object”, or “a corporate body of individuals formed for a definite purpose”. In the same manner Dr. R. C. Majumdar explains *saṃgha* in Pāṇini to mean “a definite organisation bound by laws and regulations”. Going further than the above, Dr. Jayaswal observes on the authority of Pāṇini and the Pali canonical texts that *saṃgha* and *gaṇa* were originally used in the sense of republics, the religious *saṃgha* being a later development. Referring to a particular type of *saṃgha*, namely, the *āyudhajīvi* (‘a *saṃgha* living by the profession of arms’) mentioned by Pāṇini, Bhandarkar explains the term to mean “tribal bands of mercenaries” constituting one type of the king’s army. On the other hand Jayaswal consistently with his exclusively political interpretation of *saṃgha* understands the term to mean “those republics which considered military art as the vital principle of their constitution.” Distinguishing more fully between the two types of *saṃghas*, namely, the *vārttāśāstrapajīvin* and the *rājaśabdopajīvin*, mentioned and illustrated by Kauṭilya (XI.1), Jayaswal observes

that the first type meant "nation-in-arms republics" devoted likewise by the terms of their constitution to industry and agriculture, while the second signified "king-consul republics" probably "with a regular or hired (standing) army". Dr. R. C. Majumdar renders the two terms as "independent political corporations or non-monarchical states" and as "corporations that made use of the epithet 'king' " respectively. Lastly, Bhandarkar breaking up the construction of Kauṭilya's text distinguishes three kinds of *saṃgha*, viz. the *vārtopajivin* ('a craft-guild'), the *śastropajivin* ('a mercenary tribal band') and the *rājaśabdopajivin* ('an organisation of which the members bore the title of king').¹

The question then, broadly stated, is whether the technical terms *saṃgha* and *gaṇa* are used in our early literature in the sense of an organised human community, or in the still more restricted sense of a republic. To this has to be added another question related to the former, namely whether the sub-type *āyudhajīvi-saṃgha* meant a military or a political (non-monarchical) organisation. Now in the first place, it has to be remembered that Pāṇini himself distinguishes by implication between *saṃghas* having common characteristics and those which simply signify a crowd. To this we have to add that the grammarians of Pāṇini's school continued down to later times to understand *saṃgha* in the generic sense of a multitude or a group of living beings such as birds and domestic animals as distinguished from a *saṃghāta* or a heap of inanimate matter.² In the Pali canonical literature the two terms have a generic as well as a specific significance. In the former sense, *gaṇa* is applied to a multitude not only of gods, demi-gods and men, but also of birds and beasts and even of trees and stars, while in the latter sense it means "a chapter of two or three monks, a company (opposed to both *saṃgha* or the order and *puggala*, the individual)". Similarly *saṃgha* in its generic sense is used for a multitude of gods, demi-gods, men or beasts, and in its special sense for the Buddhist and other monastic orders. By contrast the regularly formed term *saṃghāta*

¹ Current interpretations of *saṃgha* and *gaṇa*:—(a) Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-46; (b) Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 221; (c) Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 28. Current interpretations of sub-types of *saṃgha*:—(a) Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32, 49, 51; (b) Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 144; (c) Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 223, 250. The older interpretation of *saṃgha* as 'tribe' was disproved by Jayaswal in his paper "An Introduction to Hindu Polity" (*Modern Review*, Calcutta, May 1913) and more fully in the first edition of *HP* (pp. 26-32).

² For the implied distinction between various types of *saṃghas* in Pāṇini vide *ibid.* III 3.42 and other *sūtras* (for refs. to which vide V.S.A.; Pāṇini p. 426) where this term is held to be

equivalent of *nikāya* meaning a religious fraternity without distinction of higher and lower, and where the derivative words *saṃghinas*, *gaṇinas* and *gaṇāchāryas* are applied to Buddhists and other contemporary teachers. For explanation of *saṃghas* by the grammarians of Pāṇini's school vide (a) Patañjali on Pāṇini, V. 1.59 interpreting *saṃgha* as *saṃūha* or *saṃuchchayaḥ*; (b) *Kāśikā* on Pāṇini IV 1.58 and III 1.42 giving concrete illustration of *saṃgha* as *prāṇinan saṃūha*—and distinguishing *saṃuchchayaḥ* from *saṃghata*; (c) *Kāśikā* on Pāṇini III 3186 where *saṃgha* is taken to be equivalent to the political type of *saṃgha* technically known as *gaṇa*.

is used for bodies of inanimate matter like bones and shoes³. Jayaswal's argument (*op. cit.*, p. 28) derived from Pāṇini's silence about the religious *saṃgha* is disproved by the equal silence of his successor Kātyāyana (c 400 B. C.) who, as the author himself states, has no explanatory or supplementary rule (*vārttika*) on Pāṇini's aphorism (III 3.86) quoted above; for nobody will contend that the Buddhist *saṃgha* either "did not exist" or "had not become important" in Kātyāyana's time. Nor again can we support Jayaswal's inference (*op. cit.*, p. 23) from a Pali canonical text (*MN*. 1.4.5) giving Vajjis and Mallas as illustrations of *saṃghas* and *gaṇas*, that these terms as yet signified *par excellence* the republics, with their secondary sense of religious communities just taking shape. For both uses of these terms are found in texts of equal antiquity⁴. It follows from the above that *saṃgha* and *gaṇa* signify in our early literature not simply or exclusively a homogeneous body, still less 'a corporate body of individuals' or 'a definite corporation bound by laws and regulations', not to speak of a republic. The term *saṃgha* was used on the contrary in the generic sense of a group of living beings in contrast with a mass of inanimate matter, the various species of this genus being represented by the political, the religious and the economic associations of human beings.

Let us pass on to the significance of the term *āyudhajīvī saṃgha*. When Bhandarkar (*op. cit.*, p. 144) explains it to mean 'tribal bands of the king's mercenaries,' he forgets that Kauṭilya (IX 2) in the course of his classification of the king's troops mentions those of the four castes, but not those of distinct tribes. Pāṇini (V 2.114) more definitely refers to the caste-wise divisions of this class, of which concrete illustrations are given in the *Kāśikā* commentary⁵. The clue to the correct interpretation of the term in question is probably to be found in Pāṇini's rule (IV.3.91) relating to individual *āyudhajīvin*s with a mountainous homeland in evident contrast with those having their home-land in the plains. Of these last the *Kāśikā* commentary gives an illustration from the men of Sāṅkāsya. The *āyudhajīvī saṃgha* of Pāṇini would, then, mean, in contrast with individual professional fighters belonging to selected areas, an organised body of men living by the fighting profession. As for the reference in Kauṭilya (XI.1), the fundamental objection against the interpretations of Dr. Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 31) and Dr. Majumdar (*op. cit.*, pp. 28 and 250) is that by assigning to the term *vārtāsastro-pajīvin* a political connotation they are simply begging the question.

³ For the textual refs. to *saṃgha* and *gaṇa* in the above senses vide P.T.S. *Dixit*. s.v. The quotation given above is taken from this work.

⁴ Compare the stock phrase applied to Gautama and to contemporary religious *saṃgha*, viz. *saṃghī cha gani-chariyocha* (*DN* I 47 *ibid* 116 *ibid*. 163 *MN* II 3 II 4 I 198 *ibid*. 227 253

II 5; *SN* I 68 IV 398 *Sūtra* of Vol. 32.

⁵ Vide Pāṇini V 2.114 where *āyudhajīvī saṃghas* are held to consist of those who are neither Brāhmaṇas nor Rājanyas and *Kāśikā* on above giving concrete examples of these as well as of those who are neither Brāhmaṇas nor Rājanyas.

On the other hand, Bhandarkar's explanation (*op. cit.*, p. 144 & n 1) violates the natural construction of the text which clearly distinguishes between two (and not three) types of organisations. May we suggest that Kauṭilya's first type means an organised body of men living broadly by the combined arts of peace and war, while his second type signifies by contrast a political community applying the royal title (probably for a sufficient property qualification) to its single (or multiple) executive head?

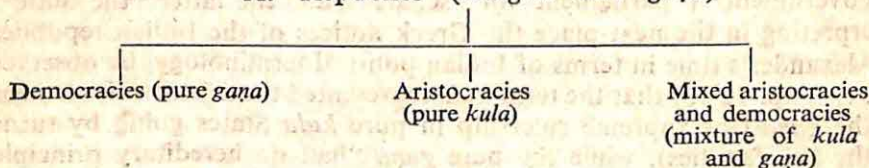
II. Classifications of republics and their nomenclature

According to Dr. Majumdar (*op. cit.*, p. 221) the description of the non-monarchical States (*saṃghas* and *gaṇas*) in the early Buddhist texts clearly shows that they had "democratic forms of government". On the other hand Dr. Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 23) explaining the difference between *gaṇa* and *saṃgha* observes that the former signifies "the form of government" ("parliament" or "senate"), and the latter "the State". Interpreting in the next place the Greek notices of the Indian republics in Alexander's time in terms of Indian political terminology, he observes (*op. cit.*, pp. 72-73) that the term *kula* represented the aristocratic element of the *gaṇa* (the supreme rulership in pure *kula* States going by turns to the few families), while the pure *gaṇa* "had no hereditary principle and was technically of the nature of a democracy." The mixed *gaṇa* and *kula* type constituting "an aristocratic democracy," he thinks (*op. cit.*, pp. 71-72 cf. *ibid.* p. 98) is illustrated by the example of "the Patalas" with their two hereditary kings subject to the *gaṇa* as well as of an unnamed community "beyond the Hupanis" (Beas) river which was ruled by an assembly of five thousand with a high (if peculiar) property qualification. Apart from this grouping of the republics, Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, pp. 47-48) quotes from the early Buddhist and Jaina texts the instance of the republican league of the Vajjis and the Lichchhavis as well as that of the Lichchhavis and the Mallas, while he understands (*op. cit.*, pp. 151-52) the legends on certain coin-types of the second and the first century B.C. to refer to the democratic republics of the Rājanyas and the Mahārājas. More systematic than the above, although based on a different interpretation of the technical terms concerned, is the classification of Dr. D.R. Bhandarkar (*op. cit.*, p. 149). Distinguishing *gaṇa* as "the best known form of the political *saṃgha*," Bhandarkar explains that *gaṇa* was "tribal in character and was confined to the Kshatriya order." Of this political *saṃgha par excellence* (or the *gaṇa*), the author further observes that its lowest political unit was the *kula* (clan or group of families) of which the headship denoted "not simply the domination of a chief over his clan, but also and principally, his supremacy over the territory occupied by that clan". Elsewhere, while declaring the chief feature of a *gaṇa* to be its division into *kulas*, the author explains that in this case "the political

power lay not in the hands of the whole people, but of a few families constituting the *gaṇa*" so as to signify an oligarchy. Further sub-dividing *gaṇa* into two classes, Bhandarkar observes that one (illustrated by the Kurus, the Pañchālas and the Yaudheyas) was an oligarchy, and the other (represented by the Lichchhavis) was "a federation of chiefs of different clans of a tribe who were also each the ruler of a small principality." The *saṃgha* itself comprised besides the *gaṇa* two other sub-types, namely, the *nigama* and the *janapada*. "Both were democracies, but the sway of the first was confined to a single town, and of the second extended over a province." The scheme of classification adopted by the two scholars last named may be shown in a tabular form as follows:—

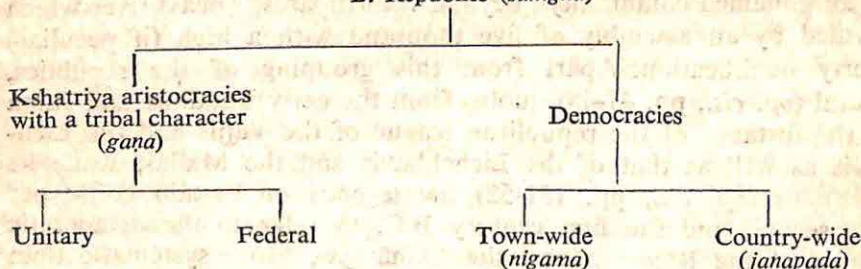
JAYASWAL'S CLASSIFICATION

A. Republics (*saṃgha* and *gaṇa*)



BHANDARKAR'S CLASSIFICATION

B. Republics (*saṃgha*)



The three views set forth above evidently represent as many different conceptions of the nature of our ancient republics. Dr. Majumdar understands the technical terms to mean democracies, although elsewhere he mentions without comment the Greek references to the aristocracies as well as democracies of the Indus valley in Alexander's time. On the other hand Jayaswal distinguishes under the appropriate technical titles the three types of republics, namely, aristocracies, democracies and mixed constitutions. Lastly, Bhandarkar distinguishes with a different interpretation of the terms in question not only between oligarchies and democracies, but also between two sub-types of each class.

The first group consists of unitary and federal oligarchies, and the second of town-wide and country-wide democracies.

Now in the first place we have no reason to think that the *saṃgha-gaṇa* of the political type had a democratic constitution. The texts quoted by Dr. Majumdar undoubtedly prove that the supreme General Assembly was "the most notable feature" of this type of polity. Other texts, however, show that the Lichchhavis (who are repeatedly mentioned along with the Mallas as typical examples of this class)⁶ formed the highest caste after the early Buddhist standards (namely the Kshatriyas) in comparison with the rest of the community consisting of Brāhmaṇas and others.⁷ The Lichchhavi constitution, in other words, (and by implication the other republican constitutions of this time as well), were not democracies, but were of the nature of aristocracies by birth. Dr. Majumdar finds in a late Sinhalese Buddhist tradition evidence of "the ultra-democratic spirit" characterising the administration of justice among the Lichchhavis and more generally of the ultra-democratic character of the Lichchhavi constitution. It will, however, be our endeavour in the course of the present chapter to show that not only is this tradition quite unsupported by the authentic evidence of the canonical texts, but it is also inherently improbable.⁸ In the second place, we can clearly distinguish in the accounts of the discerning Greek observers of Alexander's Indian campaign between two types of republics existing in the Indus valley at that time, namely aristocracies and democracies. But the third constitutional type represented, according to our view to be explained presently, by the constitution of the Śākya of Kapilavastu in early Buddhist times and the constitution of Patala in the lower Indus Valley in Alexander's time, comprises not (as Jayaswal alleges) a mixture of aristocracy and democracy, but a blending of monarchic and aristocratic elements.⁹ Thirdly, as regards the alleged special significance of *gaṇa*, no case has been made out for taking it to mean a democracy (Jayaswal), or a species of the genus *saṃgha* (Bhandarkar). Bhandarkar's further statement that the *gaṇa* was a Kshatriya aristocracy with a tribal character is a contradiction in terms, since caste, as has been well observed, is the solvent of tribe. In fact the references in Pāṇini and in the Pali texts leave us in no doubt that the *saṃghas* and *gaṇas* consisted of the usual classes of Brahmanical society. Fourthly, Jayaswal's arguments (*op. cit.*, pp. 72-3) for taking *kula* as a technical term for aristocracy are anything but convincing. In the *Mahābhārata* and *Arthaśāstra* texts quoted by him, which mention a *rājakula* of the class of *gaṇas* and one of the nature of a *saṃgha* respectively, the term *kula* need not be understood except in the ordinary sense of family (or rather clan), while Asahāya's explanation (commentary on *Nārada-Smṛiti*

⁶ For refs. vide MN I, 231, KA X I: Devendra's commentary on *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra* XV. 9 (Lichchhavis and Mallas quoted as examples of

political *saṃghas* and *gaṇa*).
⁷ Cf. DN III, 6

⁸ See below pp. 270-71

⁹ See below pp. 278, 281

1.7) that *kulas* are controlled by a few people is quite consistent with this simple and natural explanation. Again, the distinction drawn in the *Smṛitis* between *gaṇa* and *kula*, to which Jayaswal draws our attention, relates simply to the contrast between a whole community and its constituent families or clans. In the Pali canonical texts to be quoted below, *kula* bears the simple meaning of the family in the wider sense (or the clan) and nothing more. Bhandarkar's interpretation (*op. cit.*, p. 162) of a *kula* headship as implying the position of a territorial ruler along with the chieftainship of the clan, is not borne out by any evidence whatever. Indeed, the early Buddhist texts (one of which is quoted by the author) tend to show, as we hope to prove in the course of this chapter, that the authority of the *kula* head over his clan was social and moral without any trace of sovereignty. After this it is unnecessary to consider seriously Bhandarkar's ingenious suggestion (pp. 164-5) about the origin of the sovereign authority of the head of the *kula*, namely that it arose (as among the Śākya) out of the conquest and occupation of a territory by a whole Kshatriya clan, or else (as among the Kurus and the Pañchālas) out of the increasing share in the administration given by the single Kshatriya ruler of the clan to the members of his family. Fifthly, while communities like the Vajjis and the Andhaka-Vṛishnis of early Buddhist and *Mahābhārata* texts respectively have rightly been quoted by the scholars named above as examples of federal *saṃghas*, Jayaswal's view (*op. cit.*, p. 48) that "the nine Lechchhakis and the nine Mallakis" of Kāśi-Kosala mentioned in a Jaina canonical text¹⁰ point to "a federal council" with equal votes for its two component units, is far-fetched and unsound. Apart from the fact that the Jaina text mentions the nine Lechchhakis and the nine Mallakis along with (and not in the sense of) the eighteen *gaṇa-rājas*, what it probably means is that the republics in question formed a political alliance represented by their ruling councils against their common enemy, the king of Magadha. As regards Bhandarkar's interpretation (*op. cit.*, p. 167) of the the Lichchhavi *gaṇa* as 'a federation of the chiefs of the different tribal clans' who were also the rulers of small principalities, we shall presently see¹¹ that it is based upon the unauthenticated and improbable evidence of a single *Jātaka* passage. It therefore seems unnecessary to consider the author's ingenious reconstruction (p. 168) of the origin of this supposed federation, namely that the chiefs of some Lichchhavi clans after occupying the different districts remained for some time independent of one another, and that subsequently under the instinct of self-preservation they formed a *saṃgha* with autonomy for each confederated principality in certain matters and with supreme control for the *saṃgha* in others. Sixthly, Bhandarkar's contention (*op. cit.*, p. 173) that the coin-legends *Rājanya-janapadasa* and *Majhamikāya-Śibi-janapadasa* represent "a government of the people, or in other words a democracy", in contrast with those

¹⁰ The refs. is to *Kalpasūtra* p. 128.

¹¹ see below p. 267.

referring to the Yaudheya, Mālava and other *gaṇas* representing "a government by the component families of a tribe"—with which we may compare Jayaswal's view (*op. cit.*, pp. 151-52) that the coin-legends *Rājanya-janapadasa* and *Mahārāja-janapadasa* have reference to democracies—is equally unsound. Taking the term *janapada* in its primary sense of territory or country, we may explain the *janapada* coins to refer to the usual type of aristocratic republics with this difference that the emphasis is here laid upon the territorial (instead of the caste) principle. Bhandarkar's further suggestion (*op. cit.*, p. 174) that the reference in an obscure passage of *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (viii.14) to those in the Northern quarter in the lands (*janapadas*) of the Uttara-Kurus and the Uttara-Madras being consecrated for *vairāja* unlike the kings in the East, South, West and Middle quarters who were consecrated for other types of lordship indicated by corresponding technical terms proves "the democratic government in India" to date back to the Vedic period, is extremely problematic; for the passage might only mean that the two semi-mythical peoples indicated by the term *janapada* were as yet too imperfectly organised to have regular kingly rulers of the type known elsewhere.¹² Mention may also be made of the fact that the use of *virāt* in the sense of a particular type of ruler is known alike to the Vedic *Saṁhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*.^{12a} Seventhly, Bhandarkar's argument (*op. cit.*, p. 176) that a rare type of coins found on the site of Taxila with the legend *Negamā* (Skt. *Naigamāḥ*) on the obverse and various enigmatic names on the reverse refer respectively to "the body of citizens" and "the towns to which they belonged", is rightly rejected by a well-known numismatist J. Allan¹³ on the ground that the above coin-types are "too closely associated with one another and with Taxila to be separated from this city". Allan's own suggestion that the *Negamā* of the coin-legends mean "mercantile money-tokens issued by the traders", or else "trade tokens," and that the closely associated coin-type with the legend *Pañcha-nekame* (Skt. *Pañcha-naigamāḥ*) refers to a group of five guilds, is quite plausible, as also his statement that the enigmatical legends on the reverse of the *Naigama* coins have reference to "the quarters or wards" of the city. In any case, while the *Naigama* coin-types furnish a concrete illustration of the passage in Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* (chap. xiv) quoted by Bhandarkar, it does not follow that the *Naigamas* were "a corporate body endowed with political power", much less that they were "democracies confined to single towns".

¹² The above is our interpretation of the original extract in *AB VIII 14* where the Uttarakuru and the Uttaramadras are described as living in this northern quarter in *janapadas* (lands) beyond the Himavanta in evident contrast with the eastern, the southern, the western and this firm middle established quarter who were ruled by *rājans* (kings), the last-mentioned

group of peoples being illustrated by the examples of such well-known peoples as Kurus and Pañchālas.

^{12a} For a very early ref. vide *RV* 166-1. For other ref. vide *VISV*.

¹³ In the Introduction pp. CXXII CXXIX 210-38 in his work *A Catalogue of Coins of Ancient India in the British Museum*.

Bhandarkar's further argument (pp. 177-8) in favour of his theory of "a *nigamasangha* or town democracy", which is based upon the reference in a Nasik Cave inscription (*Bombay Gazetteer*, XVI. 590) to the gift of a certain village by 'the inhabitants of Nāsik city,' is deprived of much of its force by the example of two later inscriptions with dates corresponding to 876 and 904 A.D.¹⁴ In each of these examples a whole town which undoubtedly belonged to the dominions of the Gurjara-Pratihāras of Kanauj makes a gift of land in favour of a temple. This parallel suggests that the inhabitants of Nasik in the inscription quoted by Bhandarkar enjoyed proprietary (and not political) rights over the neighbouring village.

III. *Deliberative procedure of republics*

The direct evidence bearing on this point is found in two stories of the *Vinaya* section of the canon belonging to the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* school of Buddhism. When a king of Kośāla, we read in the first story in the Tibetan translation of the original,¹⁵ besieged Kapilavastu, the capital-city of the Śākyaas, he sent a messenger to them asking for its surrender. Then the Śākyaas said, 'Let us all assemble and deliberate whether we shall open the gates.' When they had assembled, some said, 'Open them', others advised not doing so. Some said, 'As there are various opinions, we will find out the opinion of the majority'. So they set about voting on the subject. In the second story which occurs in the *Chīvaravastu* ("the section on the robes of monks") of the original Sanskrit work¹⁶ we read that when Khaṇḍa, the old *senāpati* (executive and military head) of the Lichchhavis was dead, the *gaṇa* (assembly) at Vaiśālī assembled together for the election of his successor. While some proposed the election of Khaṇḍa's son out of gratitude for his services, others declared their preference for the younger and gentler son Simha to the rash older son Gopa. This last suggestion being accepted by all the members, the *gaṇa* elected Simha as the *senāpati*. We may take the above stories to illustrate two features of the traditional procedure of the early Indian republican assemblies. They prove, firstly, that the assemblies used to discuss momentous issues of the State like the surrender to a besieging force and the election of the executive head with complete freedom, and secondly that the questions at issue were decided by the unanimous opinion of the citizens, and in default by the voice of the majority.

Let us consider in the present context the evidence of two *Jātaka* stories¹⁷ which have been held by Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, pp. 76-77) to prove the use of the voting procedure in political matters 'before the birth of

¹⁴ Vide *Ep. Ind.* Vol I p. 20 No. 2 and ibid 21 bearing the dates 933 and 960 Vs respectively.

¹⁵ *Gilgit MSS* (ed. Nalinaksha Dutt

Vol III pt. 2 pp. 9-10).

¹⁶ *Gilgit MSS* Vol II pp. 352-53.

¹⁷ Vide *Jātaka* No. 270, pp. 352-53.

Śākyamuni'. In the first story we are told how all the ministers and the inhabitants of a city (*nāgaras*) being of one mind (*ekachchhandā*) elected a king to the vacant throne. This has been taken by Jayaswal to refer to 'a referendum of the whole city' in the matter of selection of a new king. In the second story which describes the origin of kingship in the folklore style, we read how in the first cycle of the world all the birds in the Himalayas following the example of the quadrupeds and fishes assembled together for the election of a king. Three times in succession they proposed the election of an owl for kingship. But on the last occasion a crow expressed his strong dissent with the result that 'a golden goose' was elected in the owl's place. This, according to Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 96), proves that 'the procedure of moving a resolution three times in political matters' was in vogue 'before Buddha's time'.

Now in the first place in so far as the *Jātaka* stories are concerned, the old view of their extreme antiquity has been completely discredited by the results of recent research which tend to show that they belong to different chronological strata from the pre-Buddhist times down to the first century of the Christian era.¹⁸ In the second place Jayaswal's interpretation of the first story is based on his explanation of *nāgara* in the text as 'a whole city instead of the city-assembly (called *negama* in Pali) only,' and that of *chhanda* 'in the technical sense of voting.' Not only, however, is the alleged fine distinction between *nāgara* and *negama* extremely problematic, but *chhanda* in its present context of a popular story should better be taken in its generic sense of 'intention' or 'resolution'.¹⁹ Thirdly and lastly, the reference in the second story to the method of election of the king of the birds is evidently a reminiscence of the procedure followed in the Buddhist ecclesiastical assembly from early times, and there is no reason to think with Jayaswal that it goes back to pre-Buddhist times. It may further be remarked that the analogy of the beginning of kingship among men, quadrupeds and fishes in the story does not justify Jayaswal's interpretation of *rājā* (king) in the story as "a republican *rājā*".

In the paucity of data directly bearing upon the deliberative procedure of Ancient Indian republics, scholars in recent times have sought to utilise the indirect evidence of the rules relating to the transactions of ecclesiastical acts (*kamma*, or more fully *saṃghakamma*) prevailing among the early Buddhist monastic orders. In the *Vinaya* compilations of early Buddhist schools going back no doubt to a common original, we have full descriptions of the impressive procedure for carrying out such acts along with a remarkable list of technical terms. For the validity of *saṃghakamma*, we are told, the assembly of the *saṃgha* was required to be complete so as to consist of 4, 5, 10, 20 or more members according

¹⁸ On the chronology of the *Jātakas*, vide Winternitz, *History*, Vol. II pp. 115-23.

¹⁹ On the significance of *nāgara* and *chhanda*, vide P. T. S. *Dict.*, s.v.

to the nature of the acts which it was required to perform. This evidently implies something like the rule of the quorum. What is more, a text of the Pali canon (*MV. XIX 3.2*) refers to a *gaṇapūṛaka* whose function was to complete the quorum in an assembly of monks. In the story of a session of the Council of Vaiśālī we hear (*CV. XII 2.7*) of a particular monk who was appointed regulator of seats (*āsanapaññāpaka*) to the elders. The transaction of the *saṃghakamma* involved two processes, namely, the resolution (*ñatti*) and the proclamation (*anussāvana*) of the proposed act (*kammavācchā*). The resolution was in the form, 'Let this be done', and it was followed by the proclamation. It was held that the reversal of this order invalidated the whole procedure *ab initio*. After this double process those who were against the resolution were called upon to speak, while those who were for it remained silent. Provision was made for the declaration of consent (technically called *chhanda*) by an absentee. The proclamation might be made only once when the act was called a *ñattidutiya kamma*, or thrice when it was a *ñattichatuttha kamma*. We have a neat summary of the above in a Pali canonical text (*MV. IX 3.9*). "If, O *bhikkhus*, at a *ñattidutiya* act the *ñatti* is proposed first and afterwards the act is performed with one *kammavācchā*, if as many *bhikkhus* as are entitled to vote are present, if the *chhanda* of those who have to declare their *chhanda* has been conveyed (to the assembly) and if the *bhikkhus* present do not protest, such an act is lawful and performed by a complete congregation. If, O *bhikkhus*, at a *ñattichatuttha* act the *ñatti* is proposed first and afterwards the act is performed with three *kammavācchās*, if as many *bhikkhus*... do not protest (as above), such an act is lawful, and performed by a complete congregation."

While the above procedure was applied in cases of *saṃghakammās* of a general character, those involving matters of dispute or disciplinary action required a more elaborate process. In the latter contingency the accused person was first made to submit to certain interrogatories after which the regular trial took place by the usual method of resolution and proclamation of the proposed act. Then the decision was given in accordance with the rules grouped under the technical term *adhikaraṇasamatha* ('the means of settling a dispute'). Ordinarily the full assembly of the *saṃgha* had to meet for such classes of acts, but in exceptional circumstances provision was made for reference to a committee (*ubbāhikā*) of different *āvāsas* ('residences'), or a committee of the same *āvāsa* duly appointed. The members of the committee would be appointed in the usual *ñatti* form by which all office-bearers of the *saṃgha* were appointed. We have a concrete instance of the settlement of an ecclesiastical dispute by an *ubbāhikā* in the description (*CV. XII 2.7f*) of the proceedings of the Council of Vesālī (Skt. Vaiśālī) mentioned above. When the *saṃgha* failed to settle the dispute about ten points of controversy raised by the monks of Vesālī, we are told, it elected a committee of eight members in accordance with a resolution proposed by a certain Revata. At the

sitting of the committee it was settled by a formal resolution that Revata was to ask and a certain Sabbakāma was to answer on points relating to the controversy, so that their respective *roles* became somewhat like those of a secretary and a chairman. At the evening session of the committee Sabbakāma, in reply to Revata's question, declared one after another all the ten points of controversy to be against the *Dhamma* and the *Vinaya*. Then Revata formally announced the result to the other members of the committee, and they cast their vote (*salākā*) accordingly. When all the ten points had thus been decided, Sabbakāma told Revata that the legal question had been settled once for all. But Revata nevertheless at Sabbakāma's instance interrogated him in the midst of the full *saṅgha* on the points mentioned above.

When the assembly got completely out of control and a unanimous decision could not be arrived at, the dispute was settled by the process of monastic law called *yebhuyyasikā* ('voting by a majority of the chapter'). This has been taken by Jayaswal to indicate the double process of ballot-voting and 'the procedure of majority.' But the procedure is more complex than is implied by the above interpretation. This is shown in the first place by the alternative methods of voting prescribed for the occasion. After a monk of unimpeachable character thereafter called *salākāgahāpaka* ('collector of voting tickets'), we are told, has been elected by the usual methods of formal resolution and decision, he may adopt one or other of three methods. These are the secret methods (*gūlhaka*), the whispering method (*sakannajappaka*), and the open method (*vīvaṭaka*). In the first case he is to make the voting tickets of different colours, and as each member comes up to him he is to say to him thus, "This is the ticket for the man of such an opinion, this is the ticket for the man of such an opinion. Take whichever you will." When the member had made his choice, he is told, "Don't show it to anybody." In the second case the *salākāgahāpaka* whispers the above words in each member's ear as he comes. It is evident that the two methods involve what may be called ballot-voting, while the third admittedly involves voting in public. In the second place it appears that not only is the presiding officer, as he may be called, allowed free choice of the method of voting, but he is also given a wide discretion about the declaration of the final result. If the *salākāgahāpaka*, we read, finds those whose opinion is against the *dhamma* to be in the majority, he is to reject the vote as wrongly taken, while he is to report the vote as well taken in the contrary case. Again, the open method is to be adopted after the *salākāgahāpaka* has ascertained beforehand that those whose opinion is in accordance with the *dhamma* are in the majority. If the fuller description in Buddhaghosa's commentary on the above can be trusted, we can conclude that the *salākāgahāpaka* in the exercise of his wide discretionary authority could reduce the whole procedure of secret voting to a farce. The secret method, we read, is to be adopted when the assembly (*parisā*) is unruly, the open method when it is afraid, and

the whispering method when it is composed of ignorant persons. In so far as the secret method is concerned, if the vote is improperly taken, he should declare it to be such. If even after taking the vote a third time, he finds those contrary to the *dhamma* to be in the majority, he should declare that day to be inauspicious, and on the next day he should take the votes of those who speak according to *dhamma* so as to discomfit those who are against the *dhamma*. As regards the whispering method if an elderly man is found to take the ticket for an unrighteous person, he should be admonished for committing an unbecoming act, and he should be shown the other ticket as that of the righteous candidate. If he values the advice, the ticket should be given to him, but he should be asked not to tell it to anybody.²⁰

On the degree of applicability of the above to the procedure of the early republican assemblies there has been some sharp difference of opinion among scholars in recent times. The extreme view is held by Dr. Jayaswal who thinks (*op. cit.*, p. 40) that the Buddha "adopted the name as well as the constitution of the political *saṃgha*". Again after stating that the highly developed stage of the Buddhist ecclesiastical procedure with its technicality of language and its most advanced concepts of legalism and constitutionalism presupposes centuries of previous experience, our author argues (*op. cit.*, p. 96) that the Buddha mentions the technical terms without any definition, that is, as terms already current. Repeating the last argument, Bhandarkar concludes (*op. cit.*, p. 184) that "the various terms and rules of debate which Buddha adopted for his religious *saṃgha* were those which could fit popular assemblies only, and must have already been followed by the *saṃghas* whether political, municipal or commercial." The above view has since been followed somewhat implicitly by two other scholars. According to Dr. B. C. Law²¹, Buddha's regulation of his religious *saṃgha* was an adaptation of the organisation of popular assemblies among the political *saṃghas*. Mr. Gokuldas De²² holds more definitely that "democracy in the Buddhist *saṃgha* was already in vogue in contemporary confederacies of the Śākya, the Koliya, the Malla, the Vajji." On the other hand Dr. R. C. Majumdar²³ thinks it to be "risky" to apply the detailed regulations of the Buddhist church to "the procedure adopted by the political assemblies of the great democratic States." The *Vinaya* extract (*MV. I* 28), he argues, gives a full exposition of the procedure concerned such as would be unnecessary if it had been a mere copy of the existing institutions, while the string of regulations in another extract (*MV. IX* 3) shows that the Buddha was "constructing

²⁰ The above account of Buddhist ecclesiastical procedure is mainly based upon the excellent summary in the work of Sukumar Dutt called *Early Buddhist Monachism*, pp. 150-55, 157.

²¹ In his work *Tribes in Ancient India*,

pp. 323-24.

²² Vide Preface to his work *Democracy in early Buddhist Saṃgha*.

²³ Vide his work *Corporate Life in Ancient India* pp. 240-45 and his chapter (Chap XII p. 333 in the work called *The Age of Imperial Unity*).

a whole system of procedure and not merely copying it from that of a political State." Nevertheless, the author thinks, the regulations are so indispensable for the working of popular assemblies that having been known in one sphere of life they were sure to be imitated in other spheres. In the result our author mentions 'five features of the Buddhist procedure' to have applied to "the popular assembly of a democratic State" in those times. These features have been summarised by him in a later work under three heads:—(1) Definite rules were laid down regarding the method of moving resolutions in the assembly, the proposal usually being repeated thrice and taken as passed in case of no objection and being passed by the vote of the majority otherwise; while counting of votes was regulated by rules and ballot-voting was in use; (2) complicated questions were referred to committees; (3) there were rules about quorum, counting of absentee votes, legalisation of acts done by an illegally constituted assembly and so forth.

When we proceed to examine the above views we have first to state negatively that the precise definition of the technical terms by the Buddha (or rather the framers of the Buddhist ecclesiastical regulations) such as has been traced by Dr. Majumdar (*op. cit.*, p. 241-3) in the *Vinaya* texts, is no argument against their derivation from the political *saṃgha*. For even if the terms were widely current at the time, the framers might be expected not to leave their interpretation to the chance of transmission by the contemporary political tradition. On the other hand we have to mention that the internal evidence of the Buddhist rules of procedure (and not merely the traditional framework of the rules) proves them to have emerged into their later shape by a process of gradual adjustment to the needs of the situation. What seems to be fairly certain is that the highly developed stage of procedure characteristic of the Buddhist rules indicates if not centuries of previous experience, at least a *milieu* in which such an experiment was not a novelty. We have a striking confirmation of this presumption in a famous and oft-quoted extract of the Pali canon where the Buddha, after specifying seven conditions of welfare of the Vajji republican *saṃgha*, proceeds immediately to apply them *mutatis mutandis* to his own *saṃgha*.²⁴ We may probably conclude from the above that the procedure of the contemporary republican assemblies bore a general resemblance to that of the Buddhist *saṃgha*, subject to such difference as is inevitable in the contrast between a sovereign political assembly and an ecclesiastical gathering of monks. In the light of this interpretation it may be held by way of supplementing and completing the meagre data of the canonical texts quoted above, that among the republican assemblies an official proposal was normally brought forward in the form of a motion which being put to the vote once or thrice (as the case might be) was declared carried if there was no opposition. In the contrary case of opposition to the proposal the

²⁴ *DN* Vol. II pp. 76-78 repeated in

AN Vol. IV pp. 21-24.

decision was probably reached by reference to a committee (*ubbāhikā*) of the assembly and in the last resort by an appeal to the majority vote (*yebhuyyasikā*) subject to very material interference by the presiding officer. We may well believe with Dr. Majumdar that the republican assemblies had definite rules about quorum, the recording of absentee votes and so forth. On the other hand it seems certain that the initiative to bring forward proposals before the members of the republican assemblies lay not with an officer specially elected for the occasion, but with the Chief Magistrate (*senāpati*) or with other high officers (*pāmokkhas*) periodically holding office, while the acceptance of such proposals by the others was not always expressed by mere silence. Finally, it may safely be affirmed that the methods of settlement of disputes in the republican assemblies, in as much as they were accompanied by political sanctions, differed in degree as well as in kind from those known to the Buddhist *saṃgha* gathering.²⁵

B. The republican and mixed constitutions of Eastern India in the time of the early Buddhist literature.

Among the peoples who have been distinguished under the titles of *saṃgha* and *gaṇa* (in the political sense of the term) in the early Buddhist as well as in some Brahmanical and Jaina texts, the first place belongs to the famous republican community called the Lichchhavis whose metropolitan city of Vaiśālī had the distinction of being the birth-place (in one of its suburbs) of Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism, and of being repeatedly visited by the Buddha in the course of his travels. The recent discussions on the constitution of the Lichchhavis have turned principally on the interpretation of two Pali texts of which one

²⁵ The methods of settling disputes in the *saṃgha*-assemblies are laid down in the eighth and concluding section of *Bhikkhu-Pātimokkha* of *Vinaya Piṭaka*. They comprised the seven processes called *sammukhāvinaya*, *sativinaya*, *amūlavinaya*, *paṭiññaya*, *yebhuyyasikā*, *tassapāpiyyasikā* and *tinavattāraka*, which have been explained (Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p. 86) to mean 'application of the disciplinary rule (to the person) in presence', 'application of the discipline in case of full consciousness (of the accused)', 'the same in the case of one not being insane' 'sentencing one who confesses (being guilty)', 'sentencing by majority of votes', 'proceeding against the obstinate', and 'covering over as by grass' respectively. When Dr. Narayan Chandra Bandyopadhyaya (*Development of Hindu Polity and Political theories*, Part I, pp. 248, 250) says that the central assemblies

of the Śākyas, the Lichchhavis and the Mallas discussed all political questions, the points at issue being put to the vote and decided by the opinion of the majority, he forgets to make allowance for the exceptional circumstances justifying the procedure of *yebhuyyasikā* in the parallel case of deliberations of the *saṃgha*, not to speak of the wide discretionary powers left to the monkish president. To the extent, however, that the ancient Indian republican assemblies imitated the principle of majority rule from the Buddhist *saṃgha*, they anticipated the course of constitutional development in Western Europe, where, as has been well observed (S. B. Chrimes, *English Constitutional Ideas in the Fifteenth Century*, p. 134, "the development of the Teutonic unanimity principle into a majority principle proper was due mainly to the inventive power of the canon law."

is found in the Preamble to the *Ekaṇṇa Jātaka* (no. 149), and the other occurs in Buddhaghosa's commentary (*Sumaṅgala-vilāsini*) (Vol. II, p. 519, P.T.S. ed.) on a well-known discourse of the Pali canon, the *Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta* of *Dīgha Nikāya*. Now the *Jātaka* text in Fausböll's standard edition runs in the current English version as follows:—"In that city there were always seven thousand seven hundred and seven kings to govern the kingdom and a like number of viceroys, generals and treasurers." Giving a different reading and construction of the relevant words in the text Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 45) translates it as follows:—"The rule vested in the inhabitants, 7707 in number, all of whom were entitled to rule: they became Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Commanders-in-Chief and Chancellors of the Exchequer." This means, according to author, that "the 7707 of the inhabitants, probably the foundation-families, were the ruling class, that is they who became the executive officeholders" constituting "the Cabinet of ministers". The other current interpretations of the above are based on the accepted reading and translation of the passage in question. According to Dr. R. C. Majumdar (*op. cit.*, pp. 229-30) the reference to the like number of viceroys, generals and treasurers shows that the Lichchhavi State "was divided into a number of small administrative units each of which was a State in miniature by itself", while "the business of the State as a whole was entrusted to an assembly consisting of the heads of those administrative units" with "a Chief or President elected for a definite period". This bears, according to the author, an obvious resemblance with the Cleisthenian Constitution of Athens. Although the number 7707, the author continues, may be purely hypothetical, it indicates the supreme assembly of the Lichchhavis to have consisted of a large number of members, and to have formed as such 'a popular body'. On the other hand Bhandarkar (*op. cit.*, p. 155) after arguing from the *Jātaka* passage that "the number of the Lichchhavi kings was pretty large", and that each king exercised supreme power over his separate principality, says on the authority of a Pali canonical text (*MN* I 231) that "the *gaṇa* as a whole could kill, burn (*sic*) or exile a man from their *vijita* or kingdom" meaning "the aggregate of principalities of the different kings".²⁶ The Lichchhavi *gaṇa*, accordingly, was "a federation of chiefs of different tribal clans" such that while "each confederated principality maintained its autonomy" in certain matters, it "allowed the *saṅgha* to exercise supreme and independent control in respect of other matters affecting the kingdom." (*ibid.* 167-8) This suggests, according to the author, "some points of resemblance" between the constitution of the Lichchhavi *Saṅgha* and "the confederation of the German States called the German Empire."²⁷

The three different interpretations given above involve as many

²⁶ Bhandarkar's rendering of *jāpetum* 'to mulet' as 'to burn' in *MN* I 231 is evidently due to his confusion of the word with *jhāpetum*.

²⁷ The above views were discussed by the present writer in his paper *The constitution of the Śākya of Kapilavastu*, *IHQ*, Vol. XX (1944) pp. 334-40.

different conceptions of the nature of the Lichchhavi polity. For while the first view would make it a unitary republican State ruled by a select body of hereditary nobles who formed the supreme executive, the second would make it a republic of a complex type with each member of the ruling assembly forming a State in miniature and with the assembly itself ruling the whole State under an elected President, and the third and last would make it a federal State with autonomy for each constituent principality and supreme control belonging to the *saṃgha*.

Our first and fundamental objection to the above group of interpretations is that the very circumstantial statements in the *Jātaka* passage just quoted are not corroborated in any particular by the authentic canonical texts. Assuming the *Jātaka* tradition to be based upon fact, does it justify the conclusions formed by the scholars mentioned above? Now in the first place Jayaswal's argument (*op. cit.*, p. 45) is based upon a series of unwarranted changes in the reading and construction of some portions of the *Jātaka* text and forced interpretation of the rest.²⁸ In fact the natural explanation of the whole passage is that 7707 *rājans* lived at Vaiśālī and the number of *uparājans*, *senāpatīs* and *bhaṇḍāgārikas* was the same in each case. Jayaswal's further suggestion (*op. cit.*, p. 45) that the four officers concerned constituted "the cabinet", like his translation of *bhaṇḍāgārika* as "Chancellor of the Exchequer", furnishes a fresh instance of his habitual tendency to interpret the Ancient Indian polity in modern constitutional and administrative terms. Besides what kind of cabinet it would be, which consisted of the whole ruling class in the State? Coming to the other interpretations of the *Jātaka* passage we have first to observe that the number of *rājans* mentioned therein has been usually dismissed e.g. by Drs. Majumdar and Bhandarkar in the passages quoted above as a purely conventional one. This, however, fails to explain why the number should be fixed at the precise figure 7707, and not as might be expected in round numbers. Whatever that may be, the literal translation of the above passage ("There were 7707 *rājans* who lived there (*scill.* in Vesālī) permanently exercising sovereign rights") suggests that 7707 nobles lived at the capital exercising sovereign authority for life. We have a partial corroboration of this explanation in another *Jātaka* text. In the preamble to the *Chullakalinga Jātaka* (No. 309 p. 1) we read:—"Vesāliam kira Lichchhavarājūnaṃ

²⁸ The *Jātaka* passage which in Fausbøll's ed. reads as *tattha niccakālam rajjam kāretvā vasantānaṃ yeva rājūnaṃ sattasahassāni sattasatāni satta ca rājāno honti, tattakā yeva uparājāno tattakā senāpatino tattakā bhaṇḍāgārikā* was read by Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 45n) in the following way;—*tattha niccakālam rajjam kāretvā vasantānaṃ yeva rājūnaṃ sattasahassāni sattasatāni satta ca* [...] *rājāno honti tattakā; ye va uparājāno tattakā, senā-*

patino tattakā, tattakā bhaṇḍāgārikā. Thus the author adds another *tattakā* before *bhaṇḍāgārikā*, secondly he construes and explains the same phrase *yeva* differently—at first as *yeva* (= *eva*) and afterwards *ye va* (= *ye eva*)—in the course of the same sentence, thirdly he explains the noun-stem *rājan* in two different senses—first as 'king' and then as 'president'—in the same passage.

sattasahassāni sattasatāni satta ca Lichchhavi vasiṃsu." We take this to mean that according to tradition 7707 Lichchhavis among the Lichchhavi nobles had their residence at Vesāli. Unless we assume that the number has been unnecessarily inflated by an additional digit at the beginning or at the end,²⁹ we have to interpret the above to mean that this was the number of foundation families of nobles taking up their residence at the capital. Further we have shown above that the Lichchhavis themselves formed the highest caste in comparison with the rest of the population. In these circumstances it is not possible to speak of the assembly of the Lichchhavis with Dr. Majumdar as "a popular body".

In so far as the reference to the *uparājans* and others in the latter part of the *Jātaka* passage quoted above is concerned, we may admit at the outset with Dr. Majumdar that the equal numbers of the *rājans* and the *uparājans* and so forth naturally suggests the association of each individual *rājan* with his corresponding troupe of officers. It is, however, hard to understand how a cumbrous constitution of this kind which puts a premium upon disruptive tendencies could work in actual practice. Dr. Majumdar's arguments in support of his contention are hardly convincing. Thus as regards the so-called analogy of the Cleisthenian constitution, it is a fact that the ten Cleisthenic tribes consisting of inhabitants of different demes were groups of citizens scattered over the whole of Attica, and their function was to elect the members of the probouleutic Council of Five Hundred, of the board of ten *strategi*, of the board of ten *apodecti* and the like. On the other hand, according to Dr. Majumdar's interpretation, the Lichchhavi *rājans* with their staff of *uparājans* etc. would all be resident at the capital, each forming admittedly "a State in miniature". Altogether inexact is the parallel drawn by the same scholar between the Lichchhavi constitution and the constitution of the pre-war German Empire. For apart from the contrast between an advanced modern Federal State and an undeveloped ancient (though not certainly a tribal) State of a tiny size, the Lichchhavi State authorities according to this interpretation would control their own armies and finances, while the Federal authority would possess supreme criminal jurisdiction but no certain control over the federal army and finance. Besides what kind of Federal State it would be with the Federal and the State authorities functioning from the same headquarters? From a general review of the whole subject, we are of opinion that the *Jātaka* statement relating to the multiple *uparājans* etc. is not only unauthenticated by independent testimony, but is *prima facie* improbable. It is not impossible that the words *tattakā yeva uparājāno* etc. were added by a later scribe who was misled by the epithet *rājāno* applied to the Lichchhavi kings into equipping each of them in the fashion of the familiar monarchic States with a staff of viceroy, general and treasurer.

²⁹ As in the alternative tradition (Māla-lasekara, *Dictionary of Pali Proper*

Names, Vol. II p. 78n) giving the number of Lichchhavi kings as 68,000.

Let us now turn to the second Pali text which occurs in Buddhaghosa's commentary on the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* cited above and which refers to a distinctive feature of the State of the Vajjis in which was included that of the Lichchhavis. According to this passage a person brought under arrest for theft was arraigned in the first instance before the judges called *vinichchayamahāmāttas*. If the latter on enquiry found the man to be innocent, they discharged him; if otherwise they sent him up to the *vohārikas*. The *vohārikas* in case they found the accused guilty made him over to the *suttadharas*, the *suttadharas* in the similar case made him over to the *aṭṭhakulakas*, the *aṭṭhakulakas* in the similar case to the *senāpati*, the *senāpati* to the *uparājā*, and the *uparājā* to the *rājā*. The *rājā* released the accused if found innocent, otherwise he punished him in accordance with the *paveṇipottthaka* ('Book of Precedents'). Explaining the above to mean that "a citizen could not be held guilty unless considered so by the *senāpati*, the *uparājā*, the *rājā*, separately and without dissent," Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 46) concludes that "the liberty of the citizen was most jealously guarded" in the Lichchhavi constitution. Going further than the above, Dr. Majumdar³⁰ says that "the position of the individual was thus safeguarded in a manner that has probably few parallels in the world." "He could be punished only if seven successive tribunals had unanimously found him guilty, and he was quite safe if but one of them found him innocent."

Our first difficulty in accepting the above explanations lies in the lateness of the tradition which has come down to us only as preserved by Buddhaghosa some eight centuries after the fall of Vajji independence. Again the very elaborate procedure described above, for which there seems to be no parallel elsewhere, is enough to raise suspicion about the genuineness of the whole account. In the *Jātaka* tales dealing with the monarchic State, the *vinichchayāmachchas* undoubtedly form the special staff in charge of civil justice, while the *senāpati* and the *uparājā* seem to be occasionally charged with this function over and above their usual duties. Finally, the king himself sits frequently as a court of first instance for the disposal of civil as well as criminal suits. Of the dispensation of criminal justice by the *vinichchayāmachchas* as well as a regular chain of courts from these officers at the bottom to the king at the top, however, there is no trace. In fact, the king appears to guard his jurisdiction over criminal cases as his special prerogative. A *vohārika*, otherwise called *vohārika-mahāmātta*, is doubtless known to the canonical texts. But the *aṭṭhakulakas* are equally unknown to the canonical and the *Jātaka* tradition. It is probable of course that the excessive centralisation of criminal justice in the king's hands in the monarchic States led to a strong reaction in the constitution of some of the republics. But to suppose that no one in the Vajji State could be convicted unless

³⁰ Vide Majumdar, *Corporate Life* p. 233, and Chap. XVII p. 333 of *The Age of*

Imperial Unity (The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. II).

unanimously found guilty by seven successive courts is to imply that the supreme authority in that State had little or no confidence in the judicial capacity or honesty of its own officers. In any case, a cumbrous procedure of the kind suggested above, providing ample loopholes for the escape of criminals from the hand of justice, would be attended with grave risk of abuse of liberty of the subject.

Summing up the above discussion we may state that the alleged judicial procedure of the Vajjis ensuring an unparalleled guarantee of liberty of the subject rests on the statement of an authority dated nearly eight centuries after the event. Though that authority claims it to have belonged to the ancient customs of the Vajjis (*Porāṇavajjīdhamma*), it is not testified to by any other extant source. Again, it has to be admitted that the procedure, if based on fact, would itself be a serious reflection on the competence of the subordinate judiciary, while it would be attended with the positive danger of abuse of the very principle it was supposed to guarantee. What, then, is the likely explanation of the statement of the famous commentator? It is not improbable that the later tradition piled up all the officers known to be associated at any time with judicial work and added other names to the list in an attempt to exalt the Vajji people and their government. It is also probable that the same tradition ascribed to the whole chain of these officers up to the *uparājā* what may have been true of some of them, namely their duty of committing to the higher court a person found to be guilty, and that of releasing him forthwith, if he was proved innocent. In conclusion, we may mention, as an apt commentary on the veracity of the late tradition, that while it credits the admittedly unitary Lichchhavi State with numbers of *uparājans* and *senāpatis*, it attributes to the known federal constitution of the Vajjis a single one of these officers.³¹

While the *Jātaka* and the commentarial traditions of the Lichchhavi constitution thus appear to be inconclusive and improbable, a welcome, if fitful light is thrown upon the same by the authentic texts of the Pali and the Sanskrit Buddhist canon which have been completely ignored by the Indian scholars mentioned above. In the Pali canonical texts the Lichchhavis are often referred to as Kshatriyas occupying the top-most place in the Buddhist social hierarchy, while they are frequently mentioned in a quite incidental fashion as assembling together at the *santhāgāra* (mote hall). It is also significant that among the above quoted seven conditions of welfare of the Vajjis (of whom the Lichchhavis were the most important element) the first place is assigned to their holding full and frequent assemblies. The plenary jurisdiction over criminals enjoyed by the Vajjis, the Mallas and the others matching that of the kings in the monarchic States is referred to in the Pali canonical text (*MN. I 231*) quoted above. Other passages in the Pali canon refer

³¹ Equally unauthenticated is the tradition recorded by the 5th century scholiast Dharmapāla in his *Dhamma-*

pada commentary (Eng. tr., *HOS*, Vol. XXX, p. 168) that the Lichchhavi kings ruled by turns.

to the *senāpati* or executive head of the Lichchhavis.³² Above all the narratives of the biographies of the *senāpati* Khaṇḍa and the courtesan Āmrāpālī in the *Vinaya* work of the Mūlasarvāstivādin school above quoted which is called the *Chīvaravastu*, illustrate the actual working of the Lichchhavi constitution. When Khaṇḍa who had been the chief minister of the king of Videha, we read in the first story, was driven by the unjust suspicion of his master to seek an asylum at Vaiśālī, he was assigned residence in the first (and the best) ward of the city because of his high birth. Vaiśālī at that time, it is explained, was divided into three wards (*skāndhas*), namely, the good, the intermediate, and the bad. The republic (*gaṇa*) of Vaiśālī had established a rule (*kriyākāra*) about the marriage of girls belonging to the different wards strangely reminiscent of the *Smṛiti* law of marriages of girls with men of different castes. A girl born in the first ward, we are told, could be given only in the first ward, and not in the second or the third, one born in the second ward could be given away in the first and the second and not in the third ward, and one born in the third ward could be given away in any one of the three wards. According to a more dubious clause the gem of a girl born in Vaiśālī was not to be given away to any body, but was to be the common possession of the *gaṇa*. In connection with this last clause we are told in the second story that the Lichchhavi Mahānāman having brought up his exceptionally beautiful foundling daughter Āmrāpālī remembered the above rule, and he asked instead the permission of the assembled *gaṇa* to bestow her in marriage upon a bridegroom of his own social status. The *gaṇa*, however, insisted upon Mahānāman's observance of this rule, and he was forced much against his will and with the conditional assent of the girl to bow to its decision. Reverting to the story of Khaṇḍa's career, we are told in the first story how he was reluctantly persuaded by the Vaiśālīans at first to attend their assemblies, and afterwards to advise them in their deliberation. Under his advice the Lichchhavis began to pitch their written communications in mild instead of harsh language as before. Finally Khaṇḍa was elected *senāpati* of the *gaṇa* when the old *senāpati* was dead. How after Khaṇḍa's death the *gaṇa* elected his younger son Sīmha instead of his elder son Gopa in his place has been told above. The resulting change is briefly indicated in the following lines where we read that while formerly the writs of the Vaiśālīans were issued in the name of the *gaṇa* headed by Khaṇḍa, they now began to be issued in the name of the *gaṇa* with Sīmha at its head. It was in this way that Gopa was apprised of his father's death and the election of Sīmha in the resulting vacancy.³³ We can conclude from the foregoing discussion that the Lichchhavi republic (*gaṇa*) of Vaiśālī possessed according to the most authentic

³² Refs.—(a) *AN* III 38-40, IV 79-82; *Vin.* I 233 (*senāpati* Siha); (b) *DN* III 15 (*senāpati* Ajita in an assembly of Lichchhavis). The *senāpati* Siha is

probably identical with Sīmha of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* story quoted below.
³³ Vide *Gilgit MSS.* (ed. Nalinaksha Dutt) vol. III, pt. 2, pp. 3ff. and 15ff.

texts two elements, namely, a *senāpati* holding office for an unknown term, and a general assembly which in its best days was noted for its full and frequent sessions. The *senāpati* was chosen by free election of the *gaṇa* assembly. The decrees of the republic were issued jointly in the names of the *senāpati* and the *gaṇa*, thus implying that while the former was the executive head of the State (the Indian counterpart of the Greek *strategos*), the latter was actively associated with the work of administration. The *gaṇa* enjoyed full rights of sovereignty over the community, its social regulations partaking of a severely paternal type. The *gaṇa* pursued the enlightened policy of allowing full political rights to distinguished *emigrés*.

In contrast with the detailed, though somewhat scattered, notices of the Lichchhavi polity in the Buddhist and other texts, the references to the sister-republics of the Mallas and so forth are remarkably scanty. We may, however, close this section with a critical account of the constitution of another community, namely, the Śākya of Kapilavastu. Years ago the late Professor Rhys Davids described the Śākyan constitution in words that have almost become classical. "The administrative and the judicial business of the clan", he wrote (*Buddhist India*, p. 19), "was carried out in public assembly at which young and old were alike present, in their common Mote-Hall (*santhāgāra*) at Kapilavastu... A single chief—how and for what period chosen, we do not know—was elected as office-holder, presiding over the sessions, and, if no sessions were sitting, over the State. He bore the title of *rājā*, which must have meant something like the Roman consul or the Greek archon." Not only are the texts, he argued, silent about "such acts of kingly sovereignty as are ascribed by them to the real kings", but the title *rājā* is applied in one place [*Vin.* II. 181] to Bhaddiya, a young cousin of the Buddha and in another place to Suddhodana, the Buddha's father, the latter being elsewhere called "a simple citizen, Suddhodana Śākiyan". Rhys Davids evidently took the Śākya constitution to be a republic with a sovereign clan-assembly and an elected President. In recent times this interpretation has formed the subject of keen controversy among Indian scholars. Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 44) quotes the above extract with approval, simply substituting 'State' for 'clan'. This definitely stamps the Śākyan republic as a territorial State instead of a mere tribal settlement. On the other hand, Bhandarkar (*op. cit.*, pp. 161-62), referring to the example of Bhaddiya Śākya-*rājā* quoted above, considers that the king of the Śākya "was not only the Chief of his clan, but was a veritable ruler or *Rājā*". Rhys Davids' view, he argues, is disproved by the fact that the *rājā* in Buddha's time "was not elected but hereditary, and was not a mere president but a ruler". According to this view the Śākyan constitution was a hereditary monarchy with a king ruling over the whole State territory. Replying to the above criticism Dr. R. C. Majumdar³⁴

³⁴ Majumdar, *Corporate Life*... pp. 237-8, repeated with slight modifications

in Chap. XVII p. 331 of *The Age of Imperial Unity*.

quotes some *Jātaka* references as furnishing "conclusive evidence in favour of Professor Rhys Davids's theory that the Śākyaas had a non-monarchical constitution." Bhaddiya, the Śākya-rāja, he explains, cannot be looked upon as a hereditary king, as the *Jātaka* instances "hardly leave any doubt that the Śākyaas, like the Lichchhavis, had a number of *rājās* who were probably members of the supreme assembly ruling over the State." From a reference to *uparājans* in *Jātaka* V 439, Dr. Majumdar further infers that "like the Lichchhavi *rājās* the Śākya *rājās* were also heads of minor administrative units." This view would bring the Śākyan constitution into line with a supposed Lichchhavi type in which the ruling nobles were also heads of minor administrative units. Dr. Majumdar's view has found partial support in Dr. Benoy Chandra Sen³⁵, who while justifying his criticism of Dr. Bhandarkar on the ground that traditions in the *Jātaka* Preambles have often been found to possess genuine historical material, does not admit that the Śākya *rājās* were also heads of minor administrative divisions. More recently Dr. A. S. Altekar, while including the Śākyaas in his list of republican peoples, argues (*op. cit.*, p. 112) that Bhaddiya may have been *rājā* in the restricted sense in which each member of the Kshatriya aristocracy ruling over these Eastern States was entitled to call himself such. The *Jātaka* evidence, he further states, while mentioning an Assembly-Hall of the Śākyaas, does not refer to a hereditary king ruling over the whole State.

In examining these discordant views we may mention at the outset³⁶ that the Śākyaas appear from all indications to have advanced beyond the stage of tribal polity to that of a territorial State. We find them occupying a more or less definite territory with a fixed capital and various smaller settlements, both being (as we shall see presently) centres of administration by assemblies. As regards the character of the constitution, we may first mention a group of three *Jātaka* stories referring to the collective body of the Śākya 'kings' and their public activities. We have first the story (Preamble to *Jātaka* no. 465) of a trick played by the Śākyaas on King Prasenajit of Kosala to circumvent his proposal for marriage with a daughter of their family. On receiving the king's message, we are told, the Śākyaas assembled together and deliberated about their dilemma in as much as by refusing the king's request they would incur his hostility, while by complying with the same they would break their family custom. The situation was saved by the resourceful Mahānāman who craftily sent his daughter by a slave-woman to the king after disarming the suspicion of the royal messengers. When the Kosala king's son by the slave-girl grew up, he was told by his mother that his maternal grandsires were the Śākya 'kings' (*Sakyarājāno*).

³⁵ Benoy Chandra Sen, *Studies in the Jātakas*, Cal. Univ. Journal of the Department of Letters, Vol. XX, pp. 25-26.

³⁶ The above views were discussed by the present writer in his paper *The Constitution of the Śākyaas of Kapilavastu* in *IHQ*, Vol. XXI (1945), pp. 1-8.

Afterwards when the Prince came to visit those relations, they decided that it was impossible to show respect to him because of his low birth. They managed to receive the Prince at the *santhāgāra* without rousing his suspicion, but at the time of his departure the secret of his birth was betrayed by the indiscretion of a slave-woman. How the Prince afterwards took a terrible revenge on the Śākya for this insult is told in the sequel. The second story (Preamble to *Jātaka* no. 547) is that of the reception given by the Śākyas to the Buddha in honour of his visit to Kapilavastu. When the Buddha entered the city, we read, the Śākya 'kings' gathered together (evidently at the *santhāgāra*) to arrange for his reception. They sent the youngest girls and boys of the town followed by the princes and the princesses (*rājakumāre cha rājakumāriyo cha*) to escort the distinguished guest to his abode. At the reception given to the Buddha they with characteristic caste pride asked the younger princes to do him obeisance, while they themselves sat behind without doing the same. When, however, an unnamed king (evidently meaning Siddhodana) being impressed by the Buddha's exhibition of a miracle recalled his doing obeisance to the Master twice before (at his birth and on the occasion of the Ploughing Festival) and did the same now, the rest could not but follow suit. The third story (Preamble to *Jātaka* no. 536) vividly describes the incidents of a quarrel between the Śākyas of Kapilavastu and their neighbours the Koliyas of Koliyanagara. The Śākya and the Koliya labourers, having started a quarrel about the distribution of irrigation-water from the boundary river, reported the matter to the officers (*amachchas*) concerned, who in their turn reported to the group of kings (*rājakula*). Then the Śākyas and the Koliyas sallied forth for the fight. When the Master coming upon the scene pacified the parties, they showed their gratitude by each presenting him with an escort of 250 princes (*kumāras*). Along with the above we may mention other passages referring to the collective body of the Śākya 'kings', as when we are told (*Jātaka* no. 466 p. 158) how Devadatta, the wicked cousin of the Buddha, lamented that he had been renounced by the Śākya *rājakulas*.

The above passages would seem to prove conclusively Dr. Majumdar's case for supporting against Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, Rhys Davids's view of the Śākyan constitution as a republic. In the first story just cited the Śākyan 'kings' are shown as collectively exercising the sovereign rights of deliberation on public affairs, of receiving a foreign ambassador and of giving reception to a foreign prince.³⁷ The second story mentions how the Śākya 'kings' and junior cadets of their families collectively took part in welcoming and receiving in audience a great religious teacher. In the third story the Śākya 'kings' are mentioned as receiving administrative reports through the usual official channel and deciding on war

³⁷ On the other hand the text is silent about anyone occupying the position of supreme head, the leadership attrib-

uted herein to Mahānāman is evidently due to his remarkable unscrupulousness and cunning.

with a neighbour. Reference is also made to the princes whose large number according to the dubious interpretation of Dr. Majumdar is an indication of the considerable body of the Śākya 'kings'. It would appear from the above that the constitution of the Śākyas was beyond doubt an aristocratic republic with a sovereign assembly of hereditary nobles. A word, however, may be added about the alleged structure of this republic. In the Preamble to *Jātaka* no. 536 quoted above the author gives us what he himself calls a less authoritative version of the occasion of the quarrel between the Śākyas and the Koliyas. According to this account the quarrel was started by female slaves of both communities, and then the inhabitants of the towns, the slaves and labourers, the attendants, the village headmen, the *amachchas* and the *uparājans* successively sallied forth for the fight.³⁸ This description obviously would befit a pair of rival teams rather than of well-ordered States. When we consider the lateness of this account, its admitted unreliability and its inherent improbability, we may well hesitate to accept it with Dr. Majumdar as evidence of Śākya *rājās* being "also heads of minor administrative units." What little warrant exists for the view that the Lichchhavi constitution conformed to this supposed type has been shown above.

Such, then, is the picture of the Śākyan constitution which is presented before us after a complete survey of the material in the *Jātaka* stories. According to the fundamental principles of historical criticism, however, the *Jātaka* evidence can only be accepted as authentic when it agrees, or at least is not contradicted by the more reliable testimony of the Pali canon. Now the evidence of the Pali canonical texts, as hinted at by Rhys Davids in the passage quoted above, appears at first sight to be quite inconclusive and even contradictory. It, therefore, seems desirable to discuss this point somewhat fully. In the first extract which belongs to the *Vinaya Piṭaka* (*Chullavagga* VII 1.3-5) we are told how six noble Śākya youths with Bhaddiya as their head renounced the world to join the Buddhist order. Here Bhaddiya is repeatedly called 'king of the Śākyas' (*Sakya-rājā*), and he is expressly stated as 'ruling' over (*rajjam kāreti*) them. When Bhaddiya is pressed by his kinsmen to join him in renouncing the world, he asks for seven days' time to make over the kingdom (*rajjam*) to his sons and brothers (*putte cha bhātare cha*). Afterwards, on attaining the fruition of his renunciation he contrasts his state of fear when he was a king (*pubbe me rañño santo*) with his present state of freedom from fear and anxiety, though living in the forest in solitude. In a second extract belonging to the *Dīgha Nikāya* (ibid II, 7 cf. ibid II, 52) the Buddha is stated at the end of a mythological account of the six pre-

³⁸ The relevant passage in the original is as follows:—"Imamhā pana nayā purimanayo vā bahūsu aṭṭhakathāsu āgato puttārūpo cā'ti sv-eva gahe-tabbo" which is translated by H.T. Francis as follows:—"But the former

version, being found in many commentaries and being plausible, is to be accepted rather than the other." (*The Jātakas...translated from the Pali by various hands*, Vol. V, p. 219).

vious Buddhas to have said of himself that at the present time he had king (*rājā*) Suddhodana as his father, Māyādevī as his mother and Kapilavāthu as his capital-city. By contrast a third canonical text (*Mahāvagga* 1, 54) from the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, while describing the Buddha's visit to Kapilavāthu, refers simply to Suddhodana Sākya and his residence (*nivesana*), while a fourth one from the *Sutta Nipāta* (verse 685 *ibid*) in the course of its description of the visit of the sage Asita to the newly born Buddha at Kapilavāthu mentions Suddhodana without any title.

Do the above facts justify the conclusion that the Śākya king was somewhat "like the Roman consul or the Greek archon (Rhys Davids)", or that Bhaddiya was a *rājā* "in the restricted sense" in which each member of the ruling aristocracy in a *gaṇa* State could call himself such (Altekar)? A careful consideration of the passages quoted above leads us to answer this question in the negative. In the text (quoted above in the *Dīgha Nikāya*) referring to King Suddhodana and his capital city Kapilavāthu, Gautama's ancestry is evidently boosted up so as to bring his career into line with that of the previous Buddhas, three of whom (Vipassi, Sikhi, and Vessabhū) are provided with royal fathers and capitals. By contrast the passages from the *Vinaya Piṭaka* and the *Sutta Nipāta* mentioning Suddhodana without any title are matter-of-fact descriptions. Suddhodana, then, appears to have been, as Dr Bhandarkar observes, really no more than a private, if distinguished, citizen of the Śākyan State. On the other hand Bhaddiya the *Sakya-rājā*, according to the text of the *Chullavagga* cited above, not only rules over the Śākyas, but also claims the right of disposing of his kingdom (*rajjā*).³⁰ From this it is difficult to avoid Bhandarkar's conclusion that the Śākyan kingship, according to these old authorities, was single and permanent as well as hereditary in character.

The canonical references to the assemblies of the Śākyas are even scantier than those relating to their king. We hear of Śākyas assembling together at the moot-hall (*santhāgāra*) in the capital-city and in an outlying settlement, but we have not the slightest hint of the constitution and functions of the Assemblies. In the first extract (*DN.* I 91) we are told how on a certain occasion the Śākyas, young and old, were seated at the *santhāgāra* when the young Brāhmaṇa Ambaṭṭha arrived in their midst only to meet with a very cold reception. A second text (*MN.* I 353f = *SN.*

³⁰ It is difficult to support Bhandarkar's arguments for rejecting Rhys Davids's interpretation of the Śākyan constitution. Not to speak of the *DN* texts (II. 7 and 52) quoted above which disprove his contention that *Vin.* II. 181 (=CV, VII 1. 3-5) is the only canonical text referring to a king of the Śākyas, it has to be mentioned that *rājā* in early Buddhist texts means not only 'a hereditary ruler', but is

used in a very general sense so as to apply "not only to an elected (or successory) crowned monarch" but also to "a distinguished nobleman or a local chieftain or a prince." (*P.T.S. Dict.* s.v. *Rājan*). Besides the example of the Lichchhavi *senāpati* belies Bhandarkar's contention that the specific title applied to a ruler periodically holding office in early Buddhist times was *mukhya* or *grāmaṇi*.

IV 182) tells us that the Śākya of Kapilavatthu having built a new *santhāgāra* persuaded the Buddha then in their midst to use it for the first time. Far into the night the Buddha instructed the Śākyas, the function ending with a discourse addressed by the Master's famous disciple Ānanda to Mahānāman, no doubt, as the most distinguished member present. In the third passage (*MN* I 457) we read that the Śākyas of Chātumā had assembled together in their *santhāgāra* on one occasion for the transaction of some business. When they saw from a distance a number of Bhikkhus going away at the behest of the Buddha, they persuaded the Master to recall them.

To judge from the above line of argument it would seem that the Śākyas according to the older and the more authentic texts had a hereditary ruler as well as an assembly of the ruling class or caste. In other words the Śākyas had a mixed constitution combining monarchic with aristocratic elements unlike the usual aristocratic type of the *Śaṅgha*—a fact which seems to be indicated by the absence of the Śākyas from the typical examples of *saṅghas* and *gaṇas* indicated in the texts. Only in the later and the less reliable *Jātaka* accounts cited above the Śākyan constitution is described as an aristocracy with a sovereign general assembly. If we have to attempt an explanation of this development, we may ascribe it to a deliberate desire of the later writers to bring the original Śākyan constitution into line with the familiar *saṅgha* type.

Before leaving this subject, it seems desirable to consider a view which attributes a somewhat composite character to the Śākyan kingship. According to Dr Bhandarkar (*op. cit.*, pp. 160, 163) the position of the Śākya ruler was a "most typical example" of the kind of rule exercised by a *kulādhīpati* (head of a *kula*), or more briefly, "*kula* sovereignty" which denoted "not merely chiefship of a clan, but also sovereignty over the territory occupied by the clan." Now in the single canonical text (*AN*. III 76) quoted by the author, the Buddha while enumerating a category of five qualities possessed by a *kulaputta* ('a clansman or a young man of good family') mentions the careers open to such a person. These are the positions of a consecrated Kshatriya king, a hereditary official (?), the commander of an army, the headman of a village, the chief of an organised community, and lastly, those who severally exercise authority over their *kulas*.⁴⁰ In another canonical text (*AN* II 249) we are told that the four causes of *kulas* having attained greatness of possession but not lasting long, are that they seek not for what is lost, they repair not the decayed, they eat and drink to excess, and lastly, that they put in authority a woman or a man that is vicious. In a third extract (*AN* III 44) we read that a believing *kulapati* (head of a *kula*) brings a five-fold

⁴⁰ The text of *AN* III 76 runs as follows;—*Yassa kassaci Mahānāma kulaputtassa pañca dhammā samvijjanti, yadi vā rañño khattiyassa muddhābhissittassa, yadi vā raṭṭhikassa pettani-*

kassa, yadi vā senāyā senāpatikassa, yadi vā gāmāgāmikassa yadi vā pūgagamanikassa, ye vā pa na kulesu paccekādhīpaccam kārenti.

growth (*scill.* in faith, in virtue, in learning, in charity, in insight) to his own folk (*antojano*). The believing *kulapati*, we are told in a shorter version of the above (*AN* I 152), brings a three-fold growth (*scill.* in faith, in virtue and in learning) to his *antojano*. In both the versions quoted last the *antojano* is described as consisting of his wife and sons, his kith and kin, his friends and followers. How the *kulajetthas* ('the elders of the *kula*') were entitled to respect from their fellows is shown by two other texts (*AN* I 138 and 142). There we read that one showing no deference to the elders of his clan and no respect for father and mother, for recluses and Brāhmaṇas, was thought to be punishable by King Yama after death, while one showing such deference and respect was deemed worthy of residence among the gods. Finally we may quote yet another canonical extract (*DN*. II 148) which describes the constitution of a *kula* in connexion with its account of the closing scenes of the Buddha's life at Kusinārā. We are there told that when the Mallas went forth to visit the dying Buddha, Ānanda arranged them in *kulas* and presented each Malla with his son and wife, his retinue and his friends with an appropriate formula. The conclusions which seem to follow from the above extracts are firstly, that *kula* meant a family in the wide sense of the term comprising not only the patriarch's relations by blood, but also his followers and friends; secondly, that the patriarch in this wide sense (*kulādhipati* or *kulapati*) exercised an authority (*ādhipatya*) over the members of the family which ranked lowest in the scale of political values and was in fact preponderantly moral; thirdly and lastly, that the members of the family or rather the clan had some voice in the election of the patriarchs so that their choice might conceivably fall on a woman or on a vicious man. That the Śākya king combined his political authority over his kingdom with such shadowy jurisdiction over his clan is in the circumstances of the case, extremely improbable. What seems likely is that the patriarchs, wielding a more or less moral authority over the constituent families or clans of the Śākyas (as among other ruling Kshatriya castes), were different from and stood on a lower level than the ruling king.

C. The republican and mixed constitutions of the Indus valley in Alexander's time

In the course of their descriptions of Alexander's Indian campaign the classical authors have given us scattered notices of the constitutions of various States, monarchical and republican, with which the great invader came into hostile or friendly contact. The references to the republican States have been discussed by Dr. Jayaswal in two chapters entitled 'Hindu republics in Greek writers (c. 325 B.C.)' and 'Constitutional survey of the Hindu republics in Greek writers' of his work *Hindu Polity*. In the first chapter (Chapter VIII) the author, while summarising the descriptions of the republican States by the Greek writers, cor-

rects their accounts of the constitutions of a few other States. Of the State of "Sophytes" (probably along the banks of the Hydraotes) he says (*op. cit.*, p. 56) that "it is not clear whether its ruler was an elected king or a regular monarch", but it was probably a republic. The same uncertainty, according to the author (*op. cit.*, p. 64), belongs to the State of "Mousikanos" (in upper Sindh). In so far as the State of Patalene (in lower Sindh) is concerned, Curtius's description of the ruler as a "nomarch" (subordinate ruler), we are further told (*op. cit.*, p. 66), is an instance of 'the confusion occasionally made by these writers'. In the following chapter (Chapter IX) the author attempts to distinguish in the light of the somewhat vague accounts of the Greek writers between the characteristic features of the North-Western republican constitutions. According to his interpretation (*op. cit.*, p. 69) the Ambashthas (Greek "Abastanoi" with variants) stated to have been a democracy had "a second house composed of elected elders", with generals 'elected' by the people and probably 'with direct franchise for every man in the community,' the Kshudrakas and the Mālavas (Greek "Oxydrakai" and "Malloi") had no "king-consul", the Kaṭhas (Greek "Kathaioi") and likewise the Subhūtis (Greek "Sophytes") had "an elected king" (thus corresponding to the *rājaśabdopajīvī saṅgha* of Kauṭilya). To continue this author's analysis of constitutional types among the republics after the description of the Greek observers, the unnamed aristocracy on the other side of the river Hyphasis (Beas) was "in fact a mixed constitution" forming "an aristocratic democracy", since the ruling body of 5,000 men was not a direct assembly but a representative one with a peculiar property qualification for the members: the constitution of the Patalas was of the same mixed type, since the hereditary kings were under the complete control of the House of Elders which in its turn was probably elected by the whole community: the executive authority in these republics was delegated in some cases to "a second chamber or House of Elders", while in the other and probably the major instances it remained with "the general *gaṇa* or parliament", "the chiefs or leaders of the *gaṇa*" forming "the executive body or the Cabinet". From the above statements, which are typical of the author's confused nomenclature and his habitual tendency to apply modern constitutional terms to the old texts, it follows that the republics of the Indus Valley were ordinarily composed of three elements called somewhat loosely "a Cabinet", an elected "second chamber" (or "second house"), and "a Parliament". For the rest "a King-Consul" existed among some republics, but not in others.

It will be convenient for us to examine the above views under two heads:—

I Constitutions of individual States

Jayaswal's argument (*op. cit.*, p. 56) (based upon a discussion by the late Professor Sylvain Lévi) for including the kingdom of Sophytes (or

Sopeithes) in his list of republics is that the place-name Subhūta (which is supposed to have given rise to Saubhūti, the Indian equivalent of Sophytes) is found in the grammatical work called the *Gaṇapāṭha* in company with Saṅkala, the capital of the republican Kāṭhas. Thus the name, we read, is found "in a republican area with republican associations and characteristics." Again we are told (*op cit.*, p. 56 n) that the coin-type Sophytes bearing on the obverse the head of a king and on the reverse the figure of a cock "is struck in the national name". Recently, however, a competent numismatist, Mr. R. B. Whitehead, has argued that Saubhūta is "philologists' creation" for which there is no historical evidence, and that the Sophytes of the coins was not an Indian ruler, but was probably a local satrap of the Oxus region, who asserted his independence after the downfall of the Persian Empire. These arguments appear to be based on cogent grounds, although they have been criticised in part by two Indian scholars. Again, not only is Sophytes called 'a king' or 'a nomarch' by the Greek writers with their accurate sense of political values, but he is stated, when going forth to meet Alexander, to have been dressed in "a royal robe all inwrought with gold and purple and adorned with magnificent ornaments", and he is further said to have surrendered a golden sceptre to the conqueror as a token of submission of his children and his kingdom. This description evidently is quite unlike that of the elected head of a republic. As regards the State of Mousikanos, this 'sovereign' according to the classical accounts at first neglected to surrender himself or his country to Alexander, but after surrendering both he was confirmed in his sovereignty. This seems to leave no room for doubting with Jayaswal whether the State had a regal or a popular constitution.⁴¹ Lastly, as regards the State of Patalene (Patala) the parallel of the Spartan constitution drawn by Diodorus suggests that the Council probably consisted of a class of hereditary nobles matching the two hereditary kings of different houses in the same State. We have here evidently an instance of a mixed constitution comprising monarchic and aristocratic elements. Of Jayaswal's view (*op. cit.*, p. 70) that the Patala constitution was "a mixture of aristocracy and democracy", or that "the ultimate political authority in all these cases rested with the *gaṇa* or the *saṅgha*," we have no evidence whatever.

II Some general characteristics of the republics

In the context from which we have quoted above Jayaswal notices

⁴¹ Designations of Sophytes:—(a) nomarch (Strabo III, 92); (b) king (Diodorus (XVII 91). The stories of the surrender of Sophytes and Mousikanos are told by Curtius (IX 1) and Arrian (XVI 15). The constitution of Patala is described by Diodorus XVII 104. For criticism of Lévi's

identification of Sophytes, vide R. B. Whitehead's paper, *The Eastern satrap Sophytes* (*Numismatic Chronicle*, 1943, pp. 60-72), on which vide further H. C. Raychaudhuri, *Political History*... 5th ed., p. 52n, and J. N. Banerjea, *JNSI*. 1944.

three elements of the constitution of the Indus Valley republics, which he calls, characteristically enough, the Cabinet, the Second Chamber, and the Parliament. In view of the evident anachronism involved in this statement it seems desirable to discuss the point from a more objective standpoint. Of the two types of republics distinguished by the classical writers, namely, aristocracies and democracies, the first is represented by an unnamed (Yaudheya?) State to the east of the Hyphasis, as well as the Kshudrakas and the Mālavas living along the banks of the Hydaspes, not to speak of the non-Indian aristocracy of Nysa (between the Kophen and the Indus) with a President and a governing body of 300 members. Of the second type we have an illustration in the State of the Ambashthas. Now the Yaudheyas (?) are said to have possessed an aristocratic government consisting of 5,000 councillors each of whom supplied an elephant to the State. Of the Kshudrakas and the Mālavas we are told that "100 ambassadors" came to Alexander from the two nations to offer terms of surrender. Again we read that after the defeat of the Malloi there came from "the Oxydrakai" "the leading men of the cities and their provincial governors besides 150 of their most eminent men" with full power of concluding a treaty. The negotiating body here referred to probably was a delegation elected with that object by the sovereign assembly, to whom were joined (according to the fuller account) the city and the country officers. We may, then, infer that the constitutions of the Kshudrakas and the Mālavas were both aristocracies of the usual *saṃgha* type with a sovereign assembly limited to the ruling Kshatriya class or caste. It may reasonably be concluded that the other constitution explicitly described as an aristocracy by the Greeks was of the same type with this difference that the ruling assembly in this case was further constituted on the basis of a high (if somewhat exceptional) property qualification. Jayaswal's statement (*op. cit.*, p. 72) that the *gaṇa* of 5,000 was not a direct assembly but a representative one, in which "evidently the elephant-men represented the no-elephant men" is a pure hypothesis, and nothing more. The democracy of the Ambashthas by contrast had presumably a sovereign assembly open to all freemen. Besides the general assembly just mentioned, the Indus Valley republics appear from the classical accounts to have possessed an elected supreme magistrate (or board of magistrates) and a Council of Elders. The former, corresponding to the *senāpati* of the Licchhavis of Eastern India, was evidently elected by the assembly. Of the latter body which may or may not have had its counterpart in the Eastern republics, the constitution and functions are not precisely known. Jayaswal's statement (*op. cit.*, p. 70) that its members were 'elected by the people' and that 'it formed a second (or revising) chamber' is not borne out by the evidence. The same scholar's case (*op. cit.* pp. 70-71) for 'a cabinet' consisting of "chiefs or heads of the *gaṇa*" rests upon the evidence of a *Mahābhārata* extract (XII. 107) recommending the consideration of State policy by the leaders alone as a remedy for the characteristic weakness of *gaṇas*,

as well as a clay-seal (not a coin-type) of the Yaudheyas from the Ludhiana district of the Punjab bearing the title "the Councillors of Victory among the Yaudheyas." Now, not to speak of the singular inappropriateness of a term meaning a body of ministers belonging to the same party and bound by a sense of collective responsibility to a popular assembly, the *Mahābhārata* extract as well as the Yaudheya seal-legend evidently could have no application to the north-western republics of Alexander's time. The evidence points, as we have suggested elsewhere,⁴² to the tendency in the first centuries before and after Christ towards concentration of political authority of the republics in the hands of a select few.*

⁴² In *A History of Indian Political Ideas*, Chapter XII.

* In the above chapter a uniform method of transliteration has been used for the word *saṃgha* in place of the various methods in vogue. On the other hand it has not been

found possible to avoid both Pali and Sanskrit forms of some proper names, such as (Pali) *sakya* and (Skt.) *Śākya*, (Pali) *Kapilavatthu* and (Skt.) *Kapilavastu*, (Pali) *Vesāli* and (Skt.) *Vaiśālī*.

CHAPTER XII

THE STATUS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE KING'S MINISTERS IN THE ANCIENT INDIAN POLITY

Among recent discussions of the role of ministers in Ancient Indian polity the most original is that of Dr. K. P. Jayaswal, as set forth in two successive Chapters (Chapter XXX and XXXI) with the title of Council of Ministers of his well-known work *Hindu Polity*. As regards the origin of this institution Jayaswal (*HP* pp. 275-276¹), after referring to the high authority of the Vedic *rājakṛits* ('king-makers') and *ratnins* ('jewel-holders'), opines that "the Hindu council of ministers was an organism which had differentiated and branched off from the old National Assembly of Vedic times." As for the function of the council of ministers (*op. cit.*, pp. 276-80, 294-96, 299-395), Jayaswal observes on the basis of the "unanimous" evidence of "the law-*sūtras*, the law-books and the political treatises" that according to "the law and principle of Hindu constitution" "the king cannot act without the approval and cooperation of the Council of Ministers"; elsewhere he concludes from texts quoted by him that "the king was bound to follow the dictates of the council," failing which he ceased to be the king in the eye of 'the constitutional law'; passing to details Jayaswal mentions on the authority of a text (II 10.26.1) of *Āpastamba-Dharmasūtra* "the very important constitutional law laid down by the *dharma* school of law-givers" to the effect that "the king was not competent to make gifts even to Brahmans if the ministers opposed the gifts." In this context of the origin of the Hindu ministry and the characteristics of the Hindu constitutional law, Jayaswal understands a story in the *Divyāvadāna* (pp. 230 ff) to mean that "the ministry under Chancellor Rādhagupta refused to make further gifts to the Buddhist Brotherhood on the order of the Emperor Aśoka." Likewise he finds in a text of Aśoka's Rock Edict VI evidence of the fact that "the ministers had been for some time opposing the rulings of the Emperor." For the above Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, pp. 276-80) finds a parallel in the Jungadh Rock-Inscription of the satrap Rudradāman (*El VIII* pp. 36-49) recording, according to his own interpretation, the ministers' refusal to pay for the repairs of the Sudarśana water-works and compelling the king to pay for the same from his private purse. Quoting in a later context a *Śukranīti* text (II 362-69) describing the elaborate business procedure of the ministry, Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, pp. 294-96) concludes that "the signed and sealed order of the king which in fact was an order of the Council" was "the real king" while one obeying the king's actual

¹ Also in the context of the author's discussion of the significance of *rāja-*

kṛits (*ibid* pp. 188-89) and *ratnins* (*ibid* pp. 190-98).

orders was regarded by constitutional law as "a thief obeying a thief". This leads him to interpret a passage in Aśoka's R E VI in the sense that when the Emperor issued orders regarding his proclamations, sermons and gifts, the Council (*Parisā*) "discussed and shelved" them, whereupon "the angry monarch directed that he should be informed when his oral orders were rejected." After some further discussion of relevant texts Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, pp. 299-305) quotes the combined evidence of Aśoka's P E IV (which he calls "one of the most important documents of the constitutional history of India") and the *Divyāvadāna* story referred to above (which was according to him "the great constitutional datum on the reign of Aśoka"), to prove that the pious despotism developed by the Emperor resulted not in the overthrow of the ministry and defiance of the constitutional law, but in the deprivation of the despot if not of his throne, at least of his sovereignty. As regards the composition of the Council of ministers, Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, pp. 284-96) singles out (amid the admitted differences in the number and designations of the ministers according to different authorities) a body of five ministers, who with the Crown Prince (*Yuvarāja*) made up "the real governing body" or "the cabinet". The list consists of (a) 'the chief minister' variously called the *mantri* (Kauṭilya's *Arthasāstra* and *Śukranīti*), or simply 'the *amātya*' (Manu and the author of the *Divyāvadāna*), or *agra-mahāmātra* (the Pali canon), (b) 'the *purohita*', (c) 'the minister of diplomacy' called *dūta* (Manu, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Śukranīti*), or *sāndhivigra-hika* (Gupta inscriptions), (d) 'the finance minister called *sumantra* (*Śukranīti*), and (e) 'the minister of war' called *senāpati* (Kauṭilya), or *sachiva* (*Śukranīti*). In the above the *Yuvarāja* according to our author is a post-Vedic development, while all the others had their origin in the *Ratnins*. Inside this council of Ministers as above defined (*sic*) there was according to Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, pp. 284-96) a body of three, four or five ministers ('an Inner Cabinet') consisting of the *mantrins* explained as 'those vested with the policy of State' (*Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*), and identified with the *Rajjukas* ('the ruling ministers' of Aśoka). Besides the above, there was the *mantriparishad* ('Council of State') consisting of the king's inner cabinet, other cabinet ministers with portfolios, and ministers with and without portfolios, as well as leaders of the town and country assemblies (*Paura* and *Jānapada*) (*op. cit.*, p. 288). The royal *Parishad* with its popular name and real popular element "carried on in some degree the Vedic tradition of the folk-assembly" (*op. cit.*, p. 290).

Reference may be made in the next place to the brief discussions of the place of ministers in the Ancient Indian polity by Dr. A. S. Altekar in Chapter VIII of his work *State and Government in Ancient India*. Though the *Rigveda* and the *Atharvaveda*, he says in one place, 'make no mention of the king's ministers,' 'the *ratnins* of the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* probably formed the king's council' (*op. cit.*, p. 161), while elsewhere (*op. cit.*, p. 163) he thinks "not unlikely" that the *ratnins*

were "selected from the members of the *samiti*", though it is doubtful whether they met as a council, or were consulted by the king in their individual capacity. Coming to the post-Vedic period, our author (*op. cit.*, p. 313-15) concludes from an extract of Aśoka's RE III that "the council's orders were to be duly recorded and expounded to the public by the local officers", and he further infers from another extract in RE VI, meaning according to him that the council "very often used to suggest amendments to the king's orders or even recommended their total reversal", that it exercised "real and extensive powers". Again he quotes without comment but evidently with approval the Buddhist tradition describing how Aśoka "had to bow down before his ministers" when they opposed his extravagant charity to the Buddhist *Samgha*. He further thinks it very probable that the Mauryas had "an Inner Cabinet" of four or five persons consisting of the *Yuvarāja*, the Prime Minister, the *Purohita*, the Commander-in-Chief and the Treasurer.

In so far as the Aśokan polity particularly is concerned, the most important recent discussion of the status and functions of the ministers is from the pen of Dr. B.M. Barua in his two books called *Inscriptions of Aśoka* (Part II) and *Aśoka and his Inscriptions* (Parts I and II, 2nd edition). In the first work he at first quotes with approval² Jayaswal's view of the derivation of the Council of ministers from the old Vedic "National Assembly", or more accurately "the working committee of the *Samiti*". But afterwards he rejects,³ on the grounds to be stated presently, Jayaswal's interpretation of an extract in RE VI in the sense that the Council of ministers had the constitutional right to reject the king's oral orders concerning gifts and proclamations affecting the royal treasury as well as the State policy: RE VI, Barua further shows, contains no warrant for holding that the contrary opinion of the Council invalidated Aśoka's act in entrusting urgent matters to the *mahāmātras* on his own initiative: Barua also disproves Jayaswal's case for the view that the majority decision of the council was binding upon the king: he concludes by quoting with approval D. R. Bhandarkar's view of the constitutional status of the *parishad*, namely that it was "like a modern executive council", "an intermediate body between the king and the *mahāmātras*", with the function of enforcing the performance of the king's written orders by different officials, as well as that of scrutinising the king's oral orders for making suggestions to the king, who was "of course the final arbiter".

In his second work Barua repeats some of the above arguments and conclusions. As regards the origin of the Council of Ministers he quotes in one place evidently with approval (*Aśoka* p. 148) Jayaswal's view that the Council "evolved out of the Vedic popular assembly (*samiti* or

² Vide *Inscriptions of Aśoka* of part I p. 292

³ Vide *Inscriptions of Aśoka* part I pp. 293-7.

parishad), and that it retained as such its representative character". Barua's view of the status and functions of the Council of Ministers is expressed on pages 132-33 of the same work. Here the author begins by explaining the reference in RE VI to mean that Aśoka's verbal orders relating to donations and proclamations and his decrees entrusting urgent State-matters to the *mahāmātras* were 'as a matter of course' referred to the Council of ministers meeting independently of the king. Then he observes that there is nothing to indicate that the Council's decision was binding on him. To the above Barua adds (*op. cit.*, pp. 132-33) that 'the legal sovereign' in the Aśokan polity was 'the king and the Council of ministers', the ministers being all 'chosen by the king. . . independently of the popular will' and the king likewise 'having the real initiative in all matters of 'national' well-being and policy as well as the power of enforcing, if not of enacting, laws.' From this he concludes (*op. cit.*, p. 133) that the Aśokan constitution was 'neither a limited monarchy' nor 'an undiluted despotism', but 'something intermediate between the two'.

We may discuss the above views under the following heads:—

I. *Constitutional status of Vedic rājakṛts* (‘king-makers’) and *ratnins* (‘jewel-holders’)

In the *Atharvaveda* passage III. 5. 6-7 quoted by Jayaswal in favour of his view of the constitutional status of the Vedic officials named above a newly consecrated king prays to a mystic wooden amulet for having a list of persons round about himself as his subjects. The list consists of the best chariot-makers and metal-workers, ‘the kings and the king-makers’ as well as the *sūtas* and the *grāmaṇis*. Jayaswal's explanation of the above extract (*op cit.*, pp. 188-89) in the sense that ‘the king-makers’ ‘appear to be the communal or popular officials of the State who were regarded as rulers amongst whom the king was the chief ruler’, and that they were ‘a part of the folk around the king who invested him with sovereignty,’ is untenable on the following grounds. Firstly, the crucial word *upastis* in the text rendered by Jayaswal as ‘aids’ is properly translated by Whitney and Lanman in their authoritative version as ‘subjects’, since it is an old Vedic word meaning ‘a client’ or ‘a dependant’. Secondly, the text clearly distinguishes between ‘the kings, the king-makers’ (meaning probably in this context the princes and the nobles), and what may be called the representatives of the industries as well as the officers of the royal court and the local administration. Thirdly, Jayaswal's argument for explaining the king-makers as ‘high functionaries or ministers’ is quite unconvincing, as it rests partly upon their identification with the *ratnins* of the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, who were a miscellaneous lot of persons comprising the officiating priests, the Queens and various officers. It is also supported by the late and obscure reference in a Pali canonical text (*DN II. 233*) to six great

were "selected from the members of the *samiti*", though it is doubtful whether they met as a council, or were consulted by the king in their individual capacity. Coming to the post-Vedic period, our author (*op. cit.*, p. 313-15) concludes from an extract of Aśoka's RE III that "the council's orders were to be duly recorded and expounded to the public by the local officers", and he further infers from another extract in RE VI, meaning according to him that the council "very often used to suggest amendments to the king's orders or even recommended their total reversal", that it exercised "real and extensive powers". Again he quotes without comment but evidently with approval the Buddhist tradition describing how Aśoka "had to bow down before his ministers" when they opposed his extravagant charity to the Buddhist *Samgha*. He further thinks it very probable that the Mauryas had "an Inner Cabinet" of four or five persons consisting of the *Yuvarāja*, the Prime Minister, the *Purohita*, the Commander-in-Chief and the Treasurer.

In so far as the Aśokan polity particularly is concerned, the most important recent discussion of the status and functions of the ministers is from the pen of Dr. B.M. Barua in his two books called *Inscriptions of Aśoka* (Part II) and *Aśoka and his Inscriptions* (Parts I and II, 2nd edition). In the first work he at first quotes with approval² Jayaswal's view of the derivation of the Council of ministers from the old Vedic "National Assembly", or more accurately "the working committee of the *Samiti*". But afterwards he rejects,³ on the grounds to be stated presently, Jayaswal's interpretation of an extract in RE VI in the sense that the Council of ministers had the constitutional right to reject the king's oral orders concerning gifts and proclamations affecting the royal treasury as well as the State policy: RE VI, Barua further shows, contains no warrant for holding that the contrary opinion of the Council invalidated Aśoka's act in entrusting urgent matters to the *mahāmātras* on his own initiative: Barua also disproves Jayaswal's case for the view that the majority decision of the council was binding upon the king: he concludes by quoting with approval D. R. Bhandarkar's view of the constitutional status of the *parishad*, namely that it was "like a modern executive council", "an intermediate body between the king and the *mahāmātras*", with the function of enforcing the performance of the king's written orders by different officials, as well as that of scrutinising the king's oral orders for making suggestions to the king, who was "of course the final arbiter".

In his second work Barua repeats some of the above arguments and conclusions. As regards the origin of the Council of Ministers he quotes in one place evidently with approval (*Aśoka* p. 148) Jayaswal's view that the Council "evolved out of the Vedic popular assembly (*samiti* or

² Vide *Inscriptions of Aśoka* of part I p. 292

³ Vide *Inscriptions of Aśoka* part I p. 293-7.

parishad), and that it retained as such its representative character". Barua's view of the status and functions of the Council of Ministers is expressed on pages 132-33 of the same work. Here the author begins by explaining the reference in RE VI to mean that Aśoka's verbal orders relating to donations and proclamations and his decrees entrusting urgent State-matters to the *mahāmātras* were 'as a matter of course' referred to the Council of ministers meeting independently of the king. Then he observes that there is nothing to indicate that the Council's decision was binding on him. To the above Barua adds (*op. cit.*, pp. 132-33) that 'the legal sovereign' in the Aśokan polity was 'the king and the Council of ministers', the ministers being all 'chosen by the king. . . independently of the popular will' and the king likewise 'having the real initiative in all matters of 'national' well-being and policy as well as the power of enforcing, if not of enacting, laws.' From this he concludes (*op. cit.*, p. 133) that the Aśokan constitution was 'neither a limited monarchy' nor 'an undiluted despotism', but 'something intermediate between the two'.

We may discuss the above views under the following heads:—

I. *Constitutional status of Vedic rājākṛits*
(*'king-makers'*) and *ratnins* (*'jewel-holders'*)

In the *Atharvaveda* passage III. 5. 6-7 quoted by Jayaswal in favour of his view of the constitutional status of the Vedic officials named above a newly consecrated king prays to a mystic wooden amulet for having a list of persons round about himself as his subjects. The list consists of the best chariot-makers and metal-workers, 'the kings and the king-makers' as well as the *sūtas* and the *grāmanīs*. Jayaswal's explanation of the above extract (*op. cit.*, pp. 188-89) in the sense that 'the king-makers' 'appear to be the communal or popular officials of the State who were regarded as rulers amongst whom the king was the chief ruler', and that they were 'a part of the folk around the king who invested him with sovereignty,' is untenable on the following grounds. Firstly, the crucial word *upastis* in the text rendered by Jayaswal as 'aids' is properly translated by Whitney and Lanman in their authoritative version as 'subjects', since it is an old Vedic word meaning 'a client' or 'a dependant'. Secondly, the text clearly distinguishes between 'the kings, the king-makers' (meaning probably in this context the princes and the nobles), and what may be called the representatives of the industries as well as the officers of the royal court and the local administration. Thirdly, Jayaswal's argument for explaining the king-makers as 'high functionaries or ministers' is quite unconvincing, as it rests partly upon their identification with the *ratnins* of the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, who were a miscellaneous lot of persons comprising the officiating priests, the Queens and various officers. It is also supported by the late and obscure reference in a Pali canonical text (*DN II. 233*) to six great

nobles as 'king-makers'.⁴ The true link between the 'the kingmakers' of the *Atharvaveda* and their later Vedic successors is furnished by such texts as *ŚB.* III. 4.1.7 and XIII. 2.2.18 applying to the *sūtas* and the *grāmaṇīs* the epithet *arājāno rājakṛitah* ('non-royal king-makers') in opposition to the *rājan* ('prince' or 'noble'), as well as *AB.* VIII. 12 and 17 assigning to the 'king-makers' (*rājakartārah*) the function of proclaiming the newly-consecrated king at the ceremony of the Great Consecration of Indra. This suggests that the *sūtas* and the *grāmaṇīs* along with the princes and nobles were still credited in the *Brāhmaṇa* times, formally at least with controlling the succession of kings. But otherwise we have no knowledge of their status and office.

As regards the *ratnins*, their importance is sufficiently indicated by the epithets 'limbs of the ruling power' as well as 'givers' and 'takers' of the kingdom applied to them in the *Yajus Samhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* texts. But Jayaswal's interpretation of the ceremony of 'jewel-offerings' (*ratna-haviṃshi*) (*op. cit.*, pp. 193-97) in the sense that the king had to 'make offerings' to them, or that he 'worshipped' them before his consecration, is belied by the fact that the text contemplates the royal sacrificer's worship of the appropriate deities at the residences of the respective *ratnins*. In fact, the true significance of the ceremony consisted in winning for the king the allegiance of these important personalities. To argue that the king 'in worshipping the *ratnins* does honour to them both as officers of the State and as representatives of the society' (Jayaswal), or that they 'probably formed the king's Council' (Altekar), is to ignore not only the miscellaneous character of their composition, but the admitted indefiniteness of the late Vedic administrative machinery. Jayaswal's further suggestion (*op. cit.*, pp. 275) (supported by Drs. Barua (*op. cit.*, p. 292) and Altekar (*op. cit.*, p. 163) that the *ratnins* "branched off" or "were selected" from the *samiti* (called by the singularly inappropriate designation of 'a national assembly' for a people who were only in part emerging from the tribal to the territorial polity) is unauthenticated and unlikely, the probability being that they were quite independent units.⁵

⁴ We quote below the text and translation of the important passage described above. The *AV* verses (III. 5.6-7) in the original are as follows:

ye dhivāno rathakārā karmārāḥ ye
manishīṇah |
upastīn parṇa mahyaṃ tvaṃ sarvān
kṛinvabhito janān ||
ye rājāno rājakṛitah sūtā grāmaṇ-
yaścha ye |
upastīn parṇa mahyaṃ tvaṃ sarvān
kṛinvabhito janān ||

The above is translated by Whitney and Lanman (*HOS.* Vol. 7, p. 92) as follows: "They that are skilful

chariot-makers, they that are intelligent metal-workers, subjects to me do thou, O *Parṇa* make all people round about. They that are kings, king-makers, that are charioteers and troops-leaders—subjects to me do thou, O *Parṇa*, make all people round about."

⁵ On the administration of the Vedic State during the successive periods (with further notices of the *rājakṛits* and the *ratnins*) vide the present writer's work *A History of Hindu Public Life*, Part I pp. 18-21, 37-42 and 100-16.

II. *Origin of the post-Vedic Council of ministers and its right of general control over the king*

Jayaswal's view of the origin and functions of the post-Vedic Council of Ministers (*op. cit.*, p. 275) which is supported by Drs. Barua (*Inscriptions*...p. 292) and Altekar, namely that the later Council of Ministers was 'differentiated' or 'evolved' from the Vedic popular assembly called the *samiti* or the *parishad*, is not supported by facts. The *parishad* appears as an alternative designation of the *samiti* only in the Older *Upanishad* texts (*CU V 3.1. ff*, *BU VI 2.1. ff* etc.), where it has the form of an aristocratic council attended by the king and the learned Brāhmaṇas and is not specifically credited with any public functions. There can, therefore, be no question of the *parishad* of the late or post-Vedic times inheriting "the popular tradition" or retaining "the representative character" of the old Vedic *samiti*. In the Pali canonical text (*Vin. III 47*) quoted by Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, pp. 275-76) for proving that the *parishad* inherited 'the prestige' of the old Vedic 'National Assembly', the term *rājan* is applied indiscriminately to rulers of various grades as well as ministers and other officials. Jayaswal's rendering (*op. cit.*, p. 287) of Aśoka's *rajjukas* as 'reins-holders (of the State) i.e. ruling-ministers' is, as will be shown in the course of the following chapter, without foundation. The designation of ministers as 'king-makers' (Pali *rājakattāro*, Skt. *rājakartāro*) in the Pali *DN* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* texts quoted by Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 188n) may be only a reminiscence of the past, as we have otherwise no knowledge of their function of controlling the king. When Barua⁶ draws from the above the conclusion that the members of Aśoka's *parisā* or Kauṭilya's *mantri-parishad* were the *rājakṛits* and the *rājakartāras* backed by the collective popular will, he makes a gratuitous assumption which is rendered extremely improbable by the admitted composition of the State-administration in either case as a highly organised bureaucracy. Again Barua's twofold characterisation of the *parishad*⁷ as 'a representative body of all officials' of the monarchic State and as a Council of ministers appears to us to be somewhat self-contradictory. Further his somewhat original conception⁸ of the king and the Council of ministers constituting 'the legal sovereign' in Aśoka's administration, is belied by the preamble of all the major edicts of the Emperor which are issued only in his own name. As regards Jayaswal's view (*op. cit.*, p. 276) that the king was prevented by "the law and the principle of the Hindu constitution" from acting without the Council's approval, the only conclusion that can be legitimately drawn from the quoted texts is that the king's consultation with his ministers was held by almost all the *Dharmaśāstra* and *Nītiśāstra* authors to be an act of his ethico-religious obligation or else of sound policy.⁹ Dr. Altekar's statement on this point (*op. cit.*, pp. 163-64),

⁶ *Inscriptions*...p. 292.

⁷ *Inscriptions*...p. 292, 294.

⁸ *Aśoka*...pp. 132-33.

⁹ On the other hand Barua's discussion

namely, that the ministry was held to be indispensable for good government by the constitutional writers seems to be much nearer the truth than the bold pronouncement of Jayaswal. Indeed we must remember that according to the best authorities the king was his own master in the selection of his ministers. What is more, the authoritative *Arthaśāstra* work of Kauṭilya and the *Dharmaśāstra* works of Manu and Yājñavalkya allow the king considerable discretion in following the advice of his ministers. Should the king again act wilfully and tyrannically the people had no choice but submission, or else the abnormal remedy of passive or active resistance. In the important instance of Aśoka, Barua's arguments quoted above help us to understand how unreal was the ministers' alleged authority to bind the sovereign by their decision.¹⁰

III. Composition of the Council of Ministers

The text of the late mediaeval work the *Śukranītisāra* (Jibananda Vidyasagar edition II 69 f) cited by Drs. Jayaswal and Altekar¹¹ contains, it is true, a list of ten ministers (*prakṛitis*) of the king with cryptic references to their distinct portfolios. Even this late description, however, suffers from the defects of ambiguity and obscurity, while it is contradicted on material points by the more authentic evidence of the historical inscriptions. In the next place the *Arthaśāstra* schools and authors, it is true, know two bodies of the king's councillors, namely, the ministers proper (*mantrins*) and the larger Council of ministers (*mantri-parishad*), although they differ widely in their estimate of the composition of these bodies.¹² But this clear-cut distinction is wanting in the parallel system of the *Dharmaśāstras*. Again the texts quoted by Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 286) do not justify his further inference about 'an inner cabinet' consisting

(Inscriptions... pp. 292 ff, *Aśoka*... pp. 132-33) of the text of RE. III which deals with the Council's direction to the *yutas* or subordinate officers of the secretariat helps to bring out its latent ambiguity. The relevant passage in the original "*parisā pi yutte āṇapayissati*" (with the variants *palisā* for *parisā*, *cha* for *pi*, *yutāni* and *yutāni* for *yutte*, and *anapeṣamti* and *annapayissamti* for *āṇapayissati*), has usually been taken to mean that the Council shall instruct the *yutas*. But, as Barua rightly observes the plural form of the verb here suggests the correct reading of the nominative to be not *parisā* meaning the Council, but *pulisā*, (Skt. *purushas*) signifying in this context the king's secretariat. As the author properly argues, the *yutas* are described in RE IV as the official agents for correct communication of the king's wishes

to the *rajukas*, while the *parishad* is not credited in R.E. VI with the instruction of the *yutas*. Barua's lucid exposition disproves Dr. Altekar's interpretation of the above in the sense that "the Council's orders were required to be recorded and expounded to the public by the local officers."

¹⁰ On the inapplicability of the term 'constitutional law' (Jayaswal) to the rules and principles of the *Smṛiti-Arthaśāstra* tradition relating to the king, vide above, Ch. VIII, pp. 292-5.

¹¹ Vide Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 341, Altekar *SGAJ* pp. 167ff).

¹² For reference to *mantrins* and *mantri-parishad* in *Arthaśāstra* works, vide Kauṭilya I. 15, of which a reminiscence is found in *Mālavikāgnimitra* drama of Kālidāsa (Act V), though not in the contemporary Gupta inscriptions.

of five ministers and 'a Council of State' comprising four classes of members. The *Dharmaśāstra* and *Arthaśāstra* (or *Nitiśāstra*) authorities in general lay down on the other hand quite flexible rules relating to the composition of the Council.¹³ Of an inner cabinet of the Mauryas such as is conceived by Dr. Altekar there is in their historical records no trace.

IV. Some alleged rights of the ministers

As regards the alleged right of the ministers to discuss and if necessary to reject the king's oral orders Jayaswal's conclusion, which is based upon his own interpretation of RE VI (*op. cit.*, pp. 301-302), is rightly rejected by Barua (*Inscriptions*.....pp. 285-86, 296-97) on the following grounds. *Firstly*, the crucial and much discussed word in the extract, namely, *nijhati* corresponds not to Skt. *nikshapti* (meaning rejection), but to Pali *nidhyapti* meaning ('an agreement as a result of sound deliberation'). Accordingly the whole passage should be translated with Barua as 'if in that connexion any difference or agreement exists in the Council of ministers, that is to be reported immediately to me in all places and at all times', and not with Jayaswal as 'if there was a division of opinion with regard to the king's proposal in the *parishad* or a total rejection, he should at once be informed of it.'¹⁴ *In the second place* Barua shows from other passages in Aśoka's edicts (Queen's Edict, Minor Rock Edict in Yerragudi version, and Pillar Edict IV) that Aśoka was the supreme authority in the administration for the purpose of instructing or directing the high officials about their duties. As to Jayaswal's explanation in the passage quoted last that the Council discussed Aśoka's orders and shelved them to the anger of the monarch, Barua points out that RE VI contains nothing to indicate that Aśoka was angry, or had reason to be so for rejection of his verbal orders by the Council. The procedure meant at the most that he invited and welcomed an honest and healthy criticism from the Council. *Thirdly*, the whole atmosphere of Aśoka's administration is indicated by the phrases in his inscriptions to be that of verbal communication. In fact

¹³ The defects of Śukra's text may be illustrated by the following alternative translations suggested for the technical designations of the ministers in his list:—(1) *pratinidhi* = 'representative of *paurajānapadas* in the cabinet or of the council in dealing with the king' (Jayaswal); 'minister deputising for the king in his absence' (Altekar). (2) *pradhāna* = 'President of the Council' (Jayaswal), 'Premier' (Altekar), (3) *mantri* = 'Home Minister' (Jayaswal), 'Foreign Minister' (Altekar). Again, the *pratinidhi* of Śukra's list is unknown to the inscriptions which likewise refer to the War Minister under

different names (*senāpati* etc.) in contrast with Śukra's *sachiva*.

¹⁴ Barua's translation of the whole text as well as his interpretation of *nijhati* is repeated by Jules Bloch in his work *Les inscriptions d'Aśoka*, p. 108 and n. Dr. Altekar's explanation (*SGAI* p. 175) of the latter part of the inscription in the sense that the decisions of the departmental heads taken in urgent cases were subject to review by the Council of ministers is a slip; for the text refers to the Council's consideration of Aśoka's orders entrusting urgent matters to the *mahāmātras*.

the whole Indian literature at that time was being orally handed down, and writing in the sense of engraving in clay, wood or stone was used for official purpose only. *Fourthly*, the argument from *Sukraniti* II 291-92 declaring the written document signed and sealed by the king to be the true king and branding the king and his officers doing State business without a written document as thieves, is vitiated by the very late date of the work. To the above we may add a few more remarks. Barua's objection against Jayaswal's interpretation is fortified by the phrase 'Thus it is commanded by me' immediately following the reference to the Council's action with regard to the king's oral orders in RE VI. On general grounds, again, it is highly improbable that Aśoka should publicise in the distant corners of his empire his discomfiture at the hands of his ministers. Further, Barua's very cogent arguments help to disprove Dr. Altekar's view of the great and extensive powers of the Council. In particular the extract in RE VI gives no support to the statement made by Altekar in this context that the Council 'very often used to suggest amendments to the king's orders, or even recommend their total reversal.' As to the alleged right of the Council to control the State's funds Jayaswal's arguments in support of the ministers' alleged refusal to sanction Aśoka's gifts to the Buddhist *Saṅgha* are criticised by Dr. Barua (*Inscriptions* pp. 295-96) on two grounds. Barua's first argument is that the text (II 10. 26. 1) of *Āpastamba-Dharmasūtra* quoted by Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 280) to prove 'the very important constitutional law of the *dharma* school of law-givers' simply promises the highest benefit to the king for his gift of land and money to Brāhmaṇas, if the same is unopposed by his servants. From this it does not follow that the king was 'not competent to make gifts even in disregard of his servants'. Barua's second argument is that the *Divyāvadāna* legend of the sad end of Aśoka is not only too fantastic and too coloured by 'later ideas of constitutional law' (*sic*) to deserve credence, but it is uncorroborated by the inscriptions which on the contrary expressly state (RE XI etc.) that the king 'honoured all sects and all denominations of recluses and householders'. In support of Barua's interpretation we may state that Aśoka's inscriptions and the *Divyāvadāna* story bear out the interpretation that he had followed a quinquennial system in carrying out works of public utility, evidently to prevent a heavy drain on the State's resources.

As regards the reference in Rudradāman's Junagadh rock inscription Jayaswal in one place (*op. cit.*, pp. 254-55) suggests it to point to the constitutional right of the *paura-jānapada* or as he calls it 'the assembly of the capital-city' and 'the realm assembly' 'to sanction' the ruler's demands for grants, but elsewhere (*op. cit.*, p. 280) he takes it to be the clearest evidence of the ministers' right to reject the ruler's proposals for money-grants out of the State-funds. It proves, so runs his characteristic comment (*op. cit.*, p. 280), 'the constitutional laws' to be 'not mere pious wishes', but to be 'as real as ordinary municipal laws of

the law-books'. We may cite here our criticism of Jayaswal's view. The whole record is admittedly of the nature of a panegyric (*prāśasti*) of the Great Satrap extolling his virtues both as a man and as a ruler after the orthodox standards. In the context in which this passage occurs the writer of the record after showering high praises upon the Śaka ruler specifically declares in the approved orthodox style, that the latter's object in undertaking the work was the benefit of cows and Brāhmanas, as well as the increase of his own religious merit and fame. What the passage in substance means is that the Great Satrap in rebuilding the mighty dam spared his subjects the extra burdens sanctioned by usage on such occasions, and graciously met the cost out of his private funds. In the next place, it claims for the governor of the province the merit of carrying out the work in the teeth of the ministers who opposed it at its very commencement because the enormous extent of the breach appeared to them to make its repair a futile project. The whole tenour as well as the spirit of the record is contrary to the conception of a constitutional opposition of the ministers or of any other public body to the ruler's proposal for sanctioning money-grants out of the State treasury.¹⁵

Thirdly and lastly, as for 'the alleged suppression of Aśoka by the constitutional act of his ministers', Jayaswal relies in the first instance (*op. cit.*, pp. 300-01) upon his original explanation of the text in PEIV, which is usually read as follows:—*Lajūkā pi laghamti paṭichalitave maṃ pulisāni pi me cchamdamnāni paṭichalisamti te pi cha kāni viyovadisamti yena maṃ lajūkā chaghamti āldhayitave...ava* (var. *āvā*) *ite pi cha me āvuti*. Jayaswal translates the whole passage after his independent reading and construction of the above in the following way: "If the *rajūkas* disregard my proclamations, my own subordinate officers will advise the provinces which wish to serve the *rajūkas*, not me...And though fallen from position, my prayer is that" etc. Now in so far as the first sentence in the above extract (*lajūkā pi...paṭichalisamti*) is concerned, the crucial word *laghamti* has been explained differently by all previous scholars. It is equated with Skt. *raṅghate*, 'they haste or are eager' (Bühler *Et.* Vol. II pp. 253-55); it is corrected into *chaghamti*, 'will be able' (Senart in *Les inscriptions in Piyadasi* Vol. II p. 42); it is connected with Skt. *arhanti*, 'they must' (Lüders in *SKPAW* 1913, p. 993 and Hultzsch (*CH* Vol I revised ed. p. 124); it is traced back to a hypotheti-

¹⁵ To the above arguments we may add the following: When Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 280) makes the ministers "refuse to pay for the repairs" of the dam so as to compel the king to pay from his private purse, (a view which is repeated by Prof. Louis Renou in his work *La civilisation de l'Inde Ancienne*, p. 142), he forgets that the reference to the ministers' opposition occurs not in the context of the king's decision

to pay as above, but in that of the local governor's achievement in carrying out a work thought to be impossible by the ministers. Evidently the governor desired to be known as a more efficient officer than even the dutiful ministers who would not let their master waste his funds upon what they considered to be an impossible project.

cal Indo-European root *rēgh-o*, *rgh-é* (Dr. S. K. Chatterjee in *ODBL* pp. 1041-42); it is connected with Skt. *rañh*, 'se hater' (to hasten) Jules Bloch in *Les inscriptions d'Asoka*, pp. 164-65); it is taken to be the future tense of a root like $\sqrt{\text{rañj}}$ (Barua in *Inscriptions...* p. 206). Again *paṭichalitave* is connected with Pali and Skt. *paricharati* (Bloch), this last conveying the sense of 'to serve,' 'to wait or attend upon'. On the other hand *pulisāni* is taken to be a nominative by Bühler and Senart, and as an accusative by the rest. Accordingly the text *lajūkā pi...paṭichalisamti* is translated by the scholars mentioned above as follows:— 'But the *lajukas* are eager to serve me. My (other) servants also, who know my will, will serve (me)' (Bühler); 'Les *rājukas*' appliquent à m'obeia; eux aussi less *purusas* obéiront à mes volontés et a mes orders' (Senart); 'Auch die *Lajjukas* müssen mir gehorchen und auch den Beamten die meinen willen kennen werden sie gehorchen' (Lüders); 'The *Lajukas* also must obey me. They will also obey the agents who know (my) wishes' (Hultzsch); 'The *lajukas* also remain (are staying) to serve (to obey) me and they will also serve (obey) the officials who know my will' (S. K. Chatterjee); 'Les contrôleurs auront aussi a m'obéir, et obéiront aussi à mes agents qui sont au courant de mes volontés' (Bloch); 'The *rajukas*, moreover, will love to serve me (and) will respond also to my *purushas* aware of my wishes' (Barua). It will be seen that all the scholars agree in taking the first part of the extract to mean that the *rajjukas* are to obey or to serve the king, while they understand the rest in two alternative senses meaning that the *rajjukas* shall obey the official agents, or else shall make the latter obey the king. Jayaswal's contrary interpretation is based upon his unwarranted equation of *laghamti* with Skt. *lañghanti* (meaning 'will disregard') and his equally unwarranted reading *palihataveti* (meaning unexplained) for *paṭichalitave*, while it ignores the significance of the double copulative *pi* (Skt. *api*) in this sentence. After this it is unnecessary to consider seriously his further comment on the above pointing to the significance of the king's 'prayer' in contrast with his 'command' in other edicts.

In so far as the following sentence in the above extract (*te pi...ālādhayitave*) is concerned, all the authorities agree in taking *te* for the *purushas* of the preceding sentence, while they take *cha kāni* as two independent words, and they equate *chaghamti* with Skt. *śakshyanti*. As for Jayaswal's contrary explanation (*op. cit.*, p. 301n) that *te* stands for *rajjukas* and *cha kāni* for 'provinces', the first supposition does violence to the context, while the second is based upon the forced interpretation of the two words in the sense of 'some ones'. Again, since the words *yena mañ lajūkā* clearly occur in the two well preserved versions of PE IV (Delhi-Topra and Radhiah), there is no reason why Jayaswal's changed reading and construction of the same (*op. cit.*, p. 302n) as *ye na mañ lajūkam* in the third version (Mathiah), which in our opinion is not justified by the transcript of the inscription, should have preference over the two other versions combined. In the last-named context,

Jayaswal's translation of *chaghamti* as 'wish to serve', in place of 'will also serve' (Skt. *śakshyanti*) of all other scholars, is not supported by any argument.

In the extract from P.E. IV quoted above (*ava ite...āvuti*), Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 302) translates the last sentence *ava ite pi* (which occurs only in the two versions at Delhi-Topra and Allahabad) as 'though fallen in position'. His translation is based on the equivalence of this phrase to *ava rite* allegedly after a text in the *Vājasaneyī Sāmhita* to which no further reference is made by him. Not only is this equivalence extremely problematic, but it fails altogether to account for the word-form *āvā ite pi* (found in the three parallel versions of the same edict at Radhiah, Mathiah and Rāmpurwa). On the other hand Bühler's rendering of *ava ite* as 'even so far' exactly fits in with this alternative form, and it is supported by Hultsch on the authority of *āvā-gamu (k)e* of the Dhauli and Jaugada Separate RE I, and by Bloch on the analogy of *āva samvatakappā* of RE IV and V and *avapaṭivesiyehi* of RE XI. As for the word *āvuti* its equivalence to Skt. *āyukti* ('order') suggested by Senart has been accepted by almost all later scholars, although Barua alternatively suggests its equation with Skt. *āvrit* meaning 'arrangement'. Senart's explanation, as Hultsch and Bloch observe, is supported by the fact that *āvutike* of the Dhauli Separate RE II corresponds to *āyutike* of the Jaugada Separate RE II. In favour of his own rendering of *āvuti* as 'prayer', Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 302n) quotes Monier-Williams's *Dictionary* s.v. *ā-vṛi*, but this reference only shows that *ā-vṛi* has on the one hand the sense 'to choose, desire, prefer', 'to fulfil', 'to grant (a wish)', and on the other hand the meaning 'to cover, hide, conceal', 'to surround, enclose' etc., the first group of meanings being found mostly in the Vedic literature, and the second group in the classical literature. Monier-Williams's authority therefore cannot be claimed for Jayaswal's explanation of *āvuti* as 'prayer'.

To the above arguments we may add a few general considerations which tend to cast grave doubts upon the correctness of Jayaswal's interpretation of PE IV. Throughout the inscription the tone is that of one administering affairs on his own authority, not that of a person who has been forced to bow to the authority of others. Let us notice the significant expression *kaṭe* (Skt. *kṛitah*) (instead of the causation *kāritah*) used no fewer than three times with reference to the vesting of authority in the *Rājukas*. In the second place, the author of the inscription is throughout anxious to declare the object of his administrative measure, namely, to secure the earthly and spiritual well-being of his subjects, and he closes with an important modification of the current rule relating to criminal trials, namely, the grant of a respite of three days to prisoners sentenced to death. Would not a sovereign who had been deprived of his authority by his ministers draw ridicule and contempt upon himself by issuing appeals in public to those who had superseded him? As for Dr. Jayaswal's explanation of *janapada* as a 'Corporate Body', it has been

disposed of by other scholars notably by Dr. Altekar, whose arguments have not yet been seriously challenged. Lastly, we may mention that if the *Rājukas*, as appears probable from our discussion in the following chapter, were of the nature of Imperial Agents, their supersession of the king would be altogether out of the question. The only 'Corporate Body' which could properly deprive the king of his authority would be the Council of Ministers (*Parishad*).

Jayaswal's next argument (*op. cit.*, p. 230) in support of his thesis of Aśoka's suppression by his ministers is based on the above-named story of the *Divyāvadāna* where we are told how the heir-apparent Sampadi at the instance of the ministers prevented the Emperor from making further gifts from the treasury to the monks, and how his allowance was cut down till at last he received only half an *āmalaka* (the myrobalan fruit) which he sent as his last offering to the *saṃgha*. Now the story just mentioned forms the last of a cycle of four legends (Nos. XXVI-XXIX) in the same work, which purport to deal with Aśoka's reign, and which bear the titles of *Pāṃśupradāna*, *Kunāla*, *Vītāśoka*, and *Aśoka*. These stories were shown long ago¹⁶ to have originally belonged to an independent work which was afterwards completely incorporated in the *Divyāvadāna*. The *Aśokāvadāna*, as this work is called, exists in two Chinese versions, one of which, called the *A-yu wang tchouan*, was prepared by the Parthian Fa K'in about A.D. 300, and the other called *A-yu wang king* was written by the monk Saṃghabhara (?) of Fou-nan in A.D. 512. Considerable fragments of the *Aśokāvadāna*, again, occur in Chap. XXV of the Chinese version of the *Saṃyukta Āgama* which was prepared between A.D. 435 and 468. Three stories of the Aśokan cycle, furthermore, (including that of the Emperor's gift of half an *āmalaka* with which we are here concerned), are found in the collection of stories which has been called *Sūtrālamkāra* and attributed to the famous Aśvaghosha.¹⁷ A comparison of the parallel versions of the above-quoted story of Aśoka's gift of half an *āmalaka* to the Buddhist order shows a common agreement on the point that the Emperor was deprived of his sovereign authority because of his extravagant donations to the Buddhist monks. This is shown in all the versions by the king's emphatic repudiation of the ministers' courtly statement that he was still the sovereign.¹⁸ Admitting the unanimity of our authorities on that point we have now to ask whether we are justified in treating their account after Jayaswal as a historical fact. As regards

¹⁶ By the late Prof. Sylvain Lévi in his classical paper *Les éléments de formation du Divyāvadāna* (*T'oung Pao*, Vol VIII, pp. 105-22).

¹⁷ For the tr. of the two Chinese versions of the *Aśokāvadāna* vide J. Przyluski, *La Légende de l'Empereur Aśoka*. The *Sūtrālamkāra* has been translated (into French) by Ed. Huber in *BEFEO*, Vol IV pp. 709-26. For the

tr. of extracts from the Chinese *Saṃyukta Āgama*, I am indebted to my late lamented friend Dr. P. C. Bagchi, Vice-Chancellor of the Viśvabhāratī University.

¹⁸ The parallel passages containing Aśoka's repudiation of his minister's statement are quoted below:—(a) *atha rājāśokaḥ sāsruddindanayanavadano'matyān uvācha dākshinyād anri-*

the external evidence Jayaswal thinks (*op. cit.*, p. 280) that 'the *gāthā* quoted in the *Divyāvadāna* story is more ancient than the compilation itself', and that it 'could not have been composed many centuries after the event'. More effective than this halting and weak defence is the fact not noticed by Jayaswal that the story of Aśoka's gift of the half *āmalaka* occurs in the *Sūtrālaṃkāra* attributed to Aśvaghoṣa, while it is incorporated in the Chinese version of the *Saṃyukta Āgama* and is thus made to form a part of the canon. But even if we could push back the date of this story to the first century A.D., there would still be a gap of three centuries from Aśoka's time. Jayaswal's arguments from internal evidence in favour of the authenticity of the Buddhist story are equally unconvincing. 'The monks', he says, (*op. cit.*, p. 280) 'were to gain nothing by an invention of such a story which threw discredit on a great personage of their religious history.' A careful study of the story in its parallel versions, however, makes it quite clear that every detail of it, so far from throwing discredit upon the Emperor, is quite consistent with his position as a shining light of the faith, while serving to vindicate its cardinal principles. Indeed, if the Buddhist monks were to think of demonstrating doctrines like the evanescence of earthly greatness, the paramountcy of fate and so forth by the example of 'a great personage of their religious history,' they could not have done better than invent the story of the great Emperor, 'the elephant among the Mauryas', who, when reduced by adverse circumstances from the position of 'Lord of *Jambudvīpa*' to that of 'Lord of half an *āmalaka*,' found solace in the words of the Master and gave his last possession to the order. Witness for example the passionate words which break forth alike in Aśoka's own pathetic lament and the grave comments of his associates.¹⁹ But then, it is urged by Dr. Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 280), the monks 'would not have invented a story which would

*tam hi kim kathayatha bhrashtādhir-
ājyā vayan śeṣaṃ tvāmalakārdhami-
tyavasitam yatra prabhutvammama
(Divyāvadāna p. 431); (b) "Alors le
roi Prononça ces stances;—'Vous
dites que j'exerce la royauté, et que
mes orders sont exécutés. C'est pour
me flatter que vous parlez ainsi. Ce
que vous dites n'est que mensonge.
Mon autorité est mort, je ne dispose
plus de rien'" (Sūtrālaṃkāra in
BEFEO. IV p. 723); (c) "Le roi dit,
'Vous êtes dans l'erreur quand vous
dites que je suis le maître. Je ne suis
pas le maître'" (Aśokāvadāna in Przy-
lusi, *La Légende*, p. 298); (d) "You
all are telling a lie to please me that I
am the established king. But I have
nothing which I can call mine own"
(*Saṃyukta Āgama*, Ch. 25, p. 180 b.
in the new Tokyo edition of the*

Tripiṭaka). In the *Divyāvadāna* story of Aśoka's message to the ministry the significant words applied to him (*Divyāvadāna* pp. 431-32) are *bhrashtādhirāja*, *bhrashtāsthāyatana* and *hṛitādhikāra*.

¹⁹ We quote below the parallel passages relating to Aśoka's lament;— (a) *aiśvaryyam dhig anāryam uddhatana-ditoyapraveśopamam martvendrasya manāpi yat pratibhayam dāridryam abhyāgatam athavā ko Bhagavato vākyaṃ anyathā karishyati samapattayo hi sarvā vipattinidhanā iti pratijñatam* (*Divyāvadāna*, loc. cit.); (b) 'La puissance est quelque chose de misérable, O combien elle est à mépriser!... Varies et non pas vaines sont les paroles du Sublime' (*Sūtrālaṃkāra* in BEFEO, loc. cit.); (c) Oh! les richesses sont profondément méprisables...

have been a bad precedent in case other monarchs wanting to imitate the munificence of the Maurya Emperor". In the form in which this story has come down to us in all its complete versions there was no room for the monks' apprehension of the consequence contemplated by Dr. Jayaswal; for we are told, immediately after the account of the king's gift of the half *āmalaka*, that he gave away before his death his whole kingdom to the *Samgha* by a sealed deed of gift, and that the ministers so far respected the Emperor's act that they redeemed it from the monks by paying four *koṭis* of gold. From the point of view of the Buddhist monks, there could be no better precedent for later 'monarchs wanting to imitate the munificence' of the great Emperor.

Even if we were to admit that the Buddhist story embodied a genuine historical tradition, it is difficult to follow Dr. Jayaswal when he acclaims it (*op. cit.*, p. 280) as 'the great constitutional datum on the reign of Aśoka'; for in the first place, the parallel versions do not agree as to the authority that deprived Aśoka of his sovereignty. In the *Sūtrālamkāra* story, for instance, we are told that when the Emperor urged his ministers to procure fresh treasures which he could bestow upon the monks, they refused to give him the same. According to the *A-yu wang tchouan* the heir-apparent Sampadi agreeing with the ministers deprived the king of all that belonged to him. In the *Divyāvadāna* story Sampadi acting in accordance with the advice of his ministers forbade the treasurer to send Aśoka's gift to the monastery. Dr. Jayaswal is not quite correct in saying that the Buddhist monks do not call the ministers sinful for their act. The version of the *A-yu wang tchouan* explicitly states that it was the bad ministers of perverse views ('de mauvais ministres aux vues perverses') that advised the heir-apparent. Indeed it is clear both from the account of *A-yu wang tchouan* and the *Divyāvadāna* that the monks regarded the action of the heir-apparent and ministers as an act of usurpation. Passing to another point, we would refer to the

Les paroles du Buddha sont véridiques. Dans ses paroles, il n'est rien qui ne soit exact. Il a dit que tous ceux qui s'aiment ont la douleur de se séparer"....(*Aśokāvadāna* in Przyluski, loc. cit.); (d) 'Oh, the wealth is to be greatly hated and abandoned. Besides let us remember the *gāthā* that Buddha has pronounced. Everything flourishing has its decline from which arises a gulf!' (*Samyukta Āgama*, p. 180). The comments of Aśoka's associates are quoted below in the parallel versions;—(a) In the *Divyāvadāna* p. 432, the *Samghasthavira* says: '*bhaddantā bhavantaḥ śakyam idānīm samvegam utpādayitum kutaḥ evaṃ hyuktam Bhagavatā paravipattiḥ samvejanīyam sthānam iti*'; (b) in the *Sūtrālamkāra* (BEFEO, IV p.

725) the messenger who takes Aśoka's gift to the monks says of the Emperor:—...*Ses bons karmans sont épuisés, brusquement sa chute est survenue. Triompé par ses karmans, il est sombre, il a perdu sa majesté, tel le soleil qui s'approche du couchant*; (c) in the *Aśokāvadāna* (Przyluski in *La Légende* p. 209) the *Sthavira* of the monastery on receiving the gift thus addresses the monks: *Il convient, à cause de cela, de ressentir pour la transmigration un dégoût et une aversion profonds. Les richesses et les plaisirs s'évanouissent rapidement. La puissance et la souveraineté sont bientôt perdues. On the story of Aśoka's gift of the whole kingdom, vide Divy. (pp. 432-33), Aśokāvadāna in Przyluski, La Légende, pp. 300-01.*

description (which is common to all versions) of the circumstances under which Aśoka was deprived of his sovereignty. The Emperor, we are told, had fallen ill and grieved that the balance of four *koṭis* out of his contemplated gift of one thousand *koṭis* to the *Samgha* was yet unpaid. When he proceeded to send the gifts to the *Kukkuṭārāma* monastery, the ministers told the heir-apparent that Aśoka had not long to live and was dissipating the treasure, and that since the strength of kings lay in the treasury, this ought to be prevented. It was thus not in vindication of 'the constitutional law' of the country but in the interests of the prospective successor to the throne that the ministers advised, if the Buddhist tradition is to be believed, the withdrawal of sovereign authority from the great Maurya.²⁰

Jayaswal's last argument refers to an extract quoted by him from Act V of the *Mālavikāgnimitra* drama of the poet Kālidāsa. In this extract we are told in connection with the settlement of a conquered territory (namely Vidarbha) by the sub-king Agnimitra that the needful was first decided by the ministers (the *amātya* and his colleagues), that on the matter being reported to the king he issued a specific verbal order for division of Vidarbha between two cousins, that this order was communicated at the king's desire to the Council of Ministers (*mantri-parishad*), and that the minister finally communicated to the king the Council's whole-hearted approval of his order. In the above Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 305) finds evidence of a well-established constitutional practice in Kālidāsa's days, namely "that the Council of Ministers was vested with the authority to decide upon the course of action to be taken even in masters of a conquered territory". The force of this argument, however, is considerably lessened by another extract (Act I) from the same drama where we read how Agnimitra, being provoked by a message from the king of Vidarbha, summarily ordered an expedition against him, and how the *amātya* meekly acquiesced in his master's resolution.

Let us sum up the results of the foregoing discussions. In the first

²⁰We quote below the passages relating to the authority that deprived Aśoka of his sovereignty:—(a) *tasmimścha samaye Kunālasya Sampadi nāma putro yuvarājye pravartate tasyāmātyair abhihitam. Kumāra Aśoko rāja svalpakālāvasthāyi idam cha dravyam kukkuṭārāmam preshyate kośabalin-āścha rājāno, nīvartayitavyaḥ yāvat kumāreṇa bhāṇḍagārikāḥ pratishiddhaḥ* (Divy. p. 430) (b) 'Il exigea de ses ministres de lui procurer encore d'autres trésors si mais ses ministres ne voulurent plus lui en donner' (*Sūtrāṅkara* in *BEFEO*, IV p. 723); (c) 'Là-dessus Eulmo-t'i [Sampadi] d'accord avec les ministres, profita de la maladie du roi pour lui retirer tout ce qui lui appartenait' (*Aśokā-*

vadāna in Przyluski, *La Légende...* p. 298); (d) 'At this the prince (San-po-ti) promptly ordered that no treasure should go out for the use of the great king (=Mahārāja)' (*Samyukta Āgama*). When Jayaswal makes 'Chancellor' Rādhagupta refuse further gifts to the Buddhist *saṃgha* in disregard of the orders of Aśoka, he overlooks the fact that Rādhagupta's name is not mentioned in any version among the ministers responsible for the revolution, while the *A-yu wang tchouan* expressly states that he advised the gift of the whole four *koṭis* to the monks, but the bad ministers advised the heir-apparent otherwise. On the nature of the ministers' act compare the following extracts;—(a) *bhrityaiḥ*

place we have endeavoured to show that the Vedic "king-makers" and "jewel-holders" certainly enjoyed sufficient political importance to make it necessary for a newly consecrated king to win their support and allegiance by a special prayer to a mystic amulet and a particular ritual of the consecration ceremony respectively. But apart from a few phrases we have no evidence to show that they had, as Jayaswal thinks, 'the constitutional right' of investing the king with sovereignty. Jayaswal's further supposition that these 'king-makers' were 'communal or popular officers' or that they along with 'the jewel-holders' were the king's ministers, is in the circumstances of the case extremely improbable. Jayaswal's next suggestion (*op. cit.*, p. 275) that the *ratnins* branched off or were selected from the Popular Assembly (*samiti*) is a gratuitous assumption, the probability being in favour of their forming from the first two independent bodies. Furthermore, the Council of ministers in Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* and in Aśoka's edicts cannot be held, as Jayaswal thinks, to represent the old Vedic folk-assembly, or to consist of 'king-makers backed by the popular will,' or to constitute 'a representative body of officials of the monarchic State'. To judge from the authoritative *Dharmaśāstra* and *Arthaśāstra* texts, it would appear on the contrary that the king was entitled to select his own ministers. The authoritative texts, again, as well as the historical inscriptions do not justify Jayaswal's conclusion that the king was prevented by the law and custom of the constitution from acting without the Council's approval. The texts in fact leave us in no doubt that the king was given considerable discretion in the matter of acting by the advice of his ministers. Again, the reference to a council of ten ministers of the king with as many distinct portfolios is found only in a text of the late *Śukranīṭisāra* quoted above on page 290. Not only, however, does this statement find no exact parallel in the earlier literature, but it is contradicted on material points by the historical inscriptions. The texts, again, do not warrant the further supposition of Jayaswal and Altekar about 'an Inner Cabinet' comprising five ministers, and 'a Council of State' consisting of four distinct classes of members. They lay down on the contrary sufficiently flexible rules relating to the composition of the Council.

sa bhūmipatir=adya hṛitadhikārah
(Divy. p. 432), (b) "Aujourd'hui il est
gouverné par la foule de ses sujets"
(*Aśokāvadāna* in Przyluski...p. 299). The
circumstances leading to Aśoka's de-
privation of his sovereignty are thus
described in the *Aśokāvadāna*. Puis
le roi Aśoka tomba malade et, sachant
qu'il allait mourir, il pleura et
fut affligé...Alors le roi donna de
l'or et de l'argent et des objets précieux
au monastère de Kukkuṭārāma...De
mauvais ministres aux vues perverses
dirent au prince héritier: 'Le roi Aśoka

approche du terme de sa vie; il dissipe
ses trésors et, donnant tout, il est sur
le point de se ruiner. Vous serez roi;
or les trésors et les objets précieux
constituent les ressources d'un roi; il
faut maintenant empêcher qu'ils ne
soient complètement dissipés' (trans
by Przyluski, pp. 296-97). Divy, pp.
429-30 has practically the same ac-
count. Even in the version of the
Sūtrālamkāra (BEFEO, IV p. 723)
the occasion of the Emperor's being
deprived of his authority is said to be
that he fell seriously ill.

Next, as regards the question of the ministers' specific privileges, Jayaswal's view crediting Aśoka's ministers with the right of discussing and even rejecting the Emperor's orders is not supported by the evidence of his inscriptions. Again, neither the *Smṛiti* texts nor the Buddhist tradition nor the historical inscriptions quoted in this connexion, bear out this scholar's interpretation that the king was incompetent to make gifts in disregard of his ministers. The alleged refusal of the ministers of a Śaka ruler to sanction his demand for money-grants out of the State treasury (Jayaswal) is based upon misapprehension of the record in question, while the alleged act of Aśoka's ministers in depriving him of his sovereignty in defence of the constitutional laws of the realm (Jayaswal) is not borne out either by the evidence of his own inscriptions, or that of the Buddhist traditions about his later career.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ANCIENT INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE NOMENCLATURE

A notable feature of the Ancient Indian polity, which testifies to the high degree of development of its bureaucratic content, is the wealth of technical titles for administrative posts that is found in our historical records, both literary and epigraphic, belonging to widely different areas of our vast country. To understand the working of the Ancient Indian administration, it is very necessary to clarify the significance of these titles as far as possible in the light of the available data. These titles have formed the subject of learned discourses by Indian as well as foreign scholars dealing with the history of single kings and of royal dynasties in the Ancient period. It is not possible to consider this vast material in the course of a single chapter. We propose instead to describe here the significance of a number of official titles under these successive dynasties, namely the Imperial Mauryas (c. 325-184 B.C.), the Imperial Guptas (c. A.D. 320-700) and the Pālas of Bengal (c. A.D. 750-1162).

A. *Period of the Imperial Mauryas*

Recent discussions on the subject of administrative machinery of the Imperial Mauryas have turned principally on a number of references in Aśoka's inscriptions and in an inscription of Rudradāman, the Śaka ruler of Western India in the second century A.D. The former are concerned with the designation and functions of the officers severally called *rajukas* (with the dialectical variations *rājūka*, *rajjuka*, *lajuka* *lajjūka*), *prādeśikas* and *yutas*; while the latter relate to the status of two high officers of the Maurya administration functioning in the imperial territory of Gujarat. As regards the first group of references, Dr. K.P. Jayaswal with his usual originality explains Aśoka's *rājukas* in his well-known work *Hindu Polity* (pp. 195n and 287) to mean 'ruling ministers' or 'High Ministers'. This interpretation, the author thinks, is justified by two texts from one of Aśoka's inscriptions (PE IV) which he translates (*op. cit.*, p. 301) in his own way as follows:—"Those *Rājukas* who are either over (the departments of) *Abhihāra* (war) or *Daṇḍa* (Home Administration) are made (declared) by me to be Protectors by themselves... I do make hereby my *Rājukas* independent in War and Peace (administration)". Along with the above arguments a few more are advanced by the author in an important paper contributed by him on the same subject to the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* (Vol. for 1918 pp. 41-43). Taking *prādeśikas* in RE III to mean "the Provincials or the Provincial Ministers", he says that *rājukas* being more important than the *prādeśikas* must mean "the Ministers at the seat of the Central Government". The reference in the same record to "the lacs and lacs"

of people made over to the care of the *rājūkas*, we are further told, proves that 'the whole of the people were under their rule', while 'their going out of office every five years also suggests that they were of the class of High Ministers.' Inferring further from a *Jātaka* text (No. 23 p. 179) that *rājūka* is derived, not (as most scholars think) from *rajju* (rope) but from *rājū* ('a known Pali word-form in the sense of ruler or king'), the author concludes that 'the *rājūkas* of Aśoka were the rulers or Rulers Ministers, the committee of the *Parisā* vested with real executive power over the whole Empire'.

Completely different from the above are the explanations of the title *rājūka* by other scholars of our times. According to Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerjee (*Chandragupta Maurya and his times*, pp. 52, 133) the *rājūkas* were 'the ordinary provincial governors' apparently in contrast with the viceroys belonging to the royal house. This view is based partly upon the supposed connexion of '*raju*' of RE III in the Manshera version (after the author's own reading) with Pali *rājan*, and partly on the extensive number of people made over to the care of these officers by the king. Dr. D.R. Bhandarkar (*Aśoka*, 2nd edition p. 204) thinks that the *rājūkas* were heads of districts as distinguished from the *prādesikas*, who were heads of divisions or provinces. Similar, but less definite, is the view of Dr. A.S. Altekar (*SGAI* pp. 206, 317), who makes out the *rājūkas* in one place to correspond to modern Divisional Commissioners, but elsewhere compares their position with that of a modern District Collector. More important is the view of Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri, who tentatively equates (*PHAI* 5th edition, pp. 318-19) the *rājūkas* on the one hand with the *Agronomi* of Chandragupta Maurya's administration (after Megasthenes' description), and on the other hand with the *rajjuka* ('rope-holding officer' or 'land-surveyor') figuring in a well-known *Jātaka* story (*Jātakas*, No. 276 p. 376). Coming to the significance of the second title, in the list quoted above, we may state that Dr. Raychaudhuri first quotes the current interpretations of Aśoka's *prādesikas* as 'local governors', 'local chiefs', 'district officers' and 'reporters', and then on the strength of Dr. F. W. Thomas's identification of these officers with Kauṭilya's *pradeshtṛis* suggests that they corresponded to "the subordinate governors, the nomarchs, hyparchs and meridarchs of Hellenistic kingdoms." By contrast Dr. Altekar contents himself with repeating without comment Dr. Thomas's identification of *prādesikas* with *pradeshtṛis* mentioned above. It is evident that the last two interpretations would invest the *prādesikas* with executive as well as fiscal function. How the last title in the list, namely *yutas*, is understood by the scholars mentioned above will be told presently.

The fullest discussion of the significance of the three titles under notice in recent times is that of Dr. B. M. Barua in his two learned works *Inscriptions of Aśoka* (Part II) pp. 239-42 and 248 and *Aśoka and his inscriptions* (Parts I and II) pp. 151-3, 192-5. In his first-named work the author observes that the *rājūkas* were 'a class of *mahāmātras* (State

officers) belonging to the central government', while the *prādeśikas* associated with them only in one inscription (RE. III) were 'a similar class of officials belonging to the provincial government.' Again, after identifying the *rajjukas* and the *prādeśikas* with the *lājavachanikas* of another inscription (SRE. I)—meaning according to the author, 'a special class of *mahāmātras* to whom the royal orders or messages were communicated with express direction as to how to put them into execution or broadcast them within their respective jurisdictions—the author declares their function to have been that of "governors, chief commissioners, commissioners according to variations in jurisdiction." In his second work Barua draws a number of important conclusions in the light of various references to these officers in the Aśokan edicts. The *rajjuka*, he says, was 'the Imperial Agent' or 'Regent', 'Commissioner' or 'Chief-Commissioner' who carried on as such the local administration with the help of his officials: unlike the *chora-rajjuka* of Kauṭilya (II 6 and IV 13) and the *rajjuka* in the *Jātaka* story quoted above, they were not land-surveyors working under a higher officer (*samāhartā* of Kauṭilya), but were themselves officials with authority over many hundreds of thousands of people, who functioned as the final court of criminal appeal as well as supreme heads of the local administration: their 'basic duty' consisted in 'the effective control of the collection and utilisation of revenue under various heads and through different departments' such as was assigned by Kauṭilya to the *samāhartā*. Coming to another point the author explains that *prādeśikas* meant 'officials in a small administrative area', and alternatively, reporters, and that they were the subordinate functionaries under the *rājukas* and themselves controlled the *yutas*, just as the *pradeshṭris* in the *Arthaśāstra* were intermediaries between the *samāhartā* on the one hand and the *gopas*, the *sthānikas* and the *adhyakshas* on the other. For the identification of *prādeśikas* with *pradeshṭris*, the author finds support in the use of the verb *pradeśana* meaning (according to *Amarakośa* X 62) 'presents due to a king'. In so far as the title *yuta* is concerned, Barua first notices its verbal correspondence with Pali *rājayutta* and Sanskrit *rājayukta* as well as *yukta* ('royal officers carrying on the administrative work in the district') of the inscriptions belonging to the early centuries before and after Christ. The *yuta*, he further says, was not 'a generic term for government officials' (R. K. Mookerjee), since they are assigned a prominent position in RE III in contrast with the *purushas* (ordinary officials) of other records. The term on the contrary meant 'the subordinate secretariat staff who accompanied the *rajjukas* and the *prādeśikas* on tour'. The *yutas* were not 'District Treasury Officers' (Bhandarkar) because their Kauṭilyan parallels (the *yuktas* and their subordinates) had charge of 'State-funds and store-houses in the custody of all departments.' Again, the duty of *gaṇanā* with which the *yutas* were entrusted (RE III) did not make them the Aśokan equivalent of Kauṭilya's *gāṇanikya* meaning 'the

Accounts Department' (Jayaswal), for the term meant codifying, recording and so forth. From the above the author concludes that the *yutas* were connected with the imperial and provincial secretariat as well as the district treasury.

It will be convenient for us to consider the above views under three heads.

I. *Rājūkas*. The passage in PE IV referring to Aśoka's delegation of powers to the *rājūkas*, which has been interpreted by Jayaswal (*Hindu Polity*, p. 301) in the sense that they were charged with the departments of war and home administration, has been taken by other scholars to mean that they were entrusted with 'rewards and punishments' (Hultzsch), or judicial investigation and punishment' (D. R. Bhandarkar), or 'the hearing of cases and the passing of sentences' (Barua), or 'the power to judge and to punish' (J. Bloch). This follows the natural meaning of *abhihāla* in the text as 'offering' or 'gift' and alternatively 'plaint', and of *daṇḍa* as 'punishment'.¹ On the other hand Jayaswal's rendering of *abhihāla* as 'war' or 'declaring hostilities', though it may claim support from Sanskrit and Pali *abhihāra* meaning 'attack' or 'assault' and 'censure' or 'abuse' respectively, is evidently a forced one², while his translation of *daṇḍa* as 'administration' or 'home-administration' or 'peace administration' is quite unwarranted. In the second place Jayaswal's etymological argument (*op. cit.*, p. 287) based upon the supposed literal significance of *rājūka* ('holder of the reins of State or of government') is altogether far-fetched and fallacious. On the other hand the connexion of *rājūka* with the *rajjuka*, or more fully the *rajjugāhaka-amachcha* of the *Jātaka* story quoted above, is based on sound philological principles. This is shown by the note kindly contributed at the writer's request by the well-known linguist Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee and appended to this chapter. The parallel Vedic term *saṃgrahitā* (charioteer) is quite naturally explained by Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara in his commentary on a *TS.* text quoted by Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 195 as 'one who holds the reins', while its alternative (not 'secondary') explanation given by the commentator in Jayaswal's somewhat forced rendering as 'he who heads (the administration by holding the reins of government)' goes no further than extending its application to the *kumārādhyaśha* which means not 'the Prince-Minister' (Jayaswal), but is probably identical with the *kumārāmātya* of the Gupta inscriptions about whom we shall speak fully in the course of this chapter. Thirdly, the reference in RE III (*Lajūkā me bahusu pānasatasahasesu janasi āyatā*) means not that 'the whole people' (JBORS 1918, pp. 41-2) but that many hundreds of thousands of them, were placed by Aśoka under the charge of the *rajjukas*. In the following passage (*sarvata vijite mama yutā cha rājūke cha prādeśike cha pañchasu pañchasu vāsesu anusaṃy-(ā)na (mn) iyātu*), *anusaṃyāna*

¹ Vide PTS Dict. s.v. *abhihāla*.

² On Pali *abhiharati* and Skt. *abhihāra*

vide respectively PTS Dict. and Apte, Skt-Eng. Dict. s.v.

has been taken by other scholars in such senses as 'tour for official inspection' (Bühler), 'circuit' (Bhandarkar) and 'complete tour' (Hultzsch), an interpretation which is supported by the verbal form of the word occurring in a Pali canonical text (*AN* I pp. 59-60) signifying going out on tour into the interior of the districts for various specified purposes. The parallel passage in the late *Sukranīti* on which Jayaswal (*op. cit.*, p. 306) depends for his own interpretation of *anusamyāna* as 'going out of office' simply relates to a king's transfer of his officials.³ Fourthly, according to the rules of Pali grammar *rājū* is not an independent noun-stem, but is one of the modified forms which the root-word *rājan* assumes in the instrumental, the dative, the ablative and the genitive plurals.⁴ In the two *Jātaka* passages referred to by Jayaswal *rājūhi* is precisely the instrumental plural of *rājan* applied respectively to a group of seven 'kings' attacking Vārāṇasī, and to the 7707 'kings' of the Lichchhavis residing in Vaiśālī.⁵ The above discussion tends to show the incorrectness of the rendering of *Rājukas* as 'High ministers' 'vested with real executive powers over the whole Empire' (Jayaswal in *Hindu Polity* p. 239 and in *JBORS* 1918, pp. 41-42).

Coming to the other interpretations of *rājukas*, the purport of Dr. Barua's discussion (*Inscriptions...* p. 434) is that they were the Imperial Agents who received express directions for carrying out and broadcasting the emperor's orders, that they combined the highest executive and judicial functions as being at once the final court of criminal appeal and the supreme heads of the local administration, and that their main function was the collection and utilisation of the revenue through various departments. On the grounds stated by this scholar the above general rendering seems to give a more correct interpretation of the function of the *rājukas* than the precise and definite view that they were 'the ordinary provincial governors' (Mookerjee), or that their office corresponded to that of the modern Divisional Commissioners or District Collectors (Altekar and Bhandarkar). In so far as Dr. Mookerjee's arguments are concerned, we have further to state that *ju* in RE III (Manshera version), as is shown by the estampage copy of this record, is an incomplete word with the initial and the final letter dropped out. Evidently it stands for the complete word *rajuko* of the Shahbazgarhi version with an identical dialect and grammar, this word itself being nothing but a dialectical variant of *rājūka* (*rājūke* in nominative singular) in the Girnar version. Secondly, although it is true that *rājaka* is a derivation from *rājan* in the sense of 'a little king' or 'a petty prince', there is no gram-

³ For discussion of significance of *anusamyāna* vide Bhandarkar. *Aśoka*, pp. 302-3.

⁴ On the case-endings of *rājan* vide Geiger, *Pali litteratur und sprache* sec. 92. Cf also *PTS Dict.* s.v.

⁵ The two *Jātaka* passages are as follows;—(a) *Rajā tam pakkosāpetvā*

'sakkhissasi tāta sattahi rājūhi yuddham kātūn'ti āha. Deva...sakala Jambudīpe rājūhi saddhim yujjhituṃ sakkhissāmi' (*Jāi* No 23 p. 179) (b) *Tattha nichchakālam rajjam Kāretvā vasantānam Yeva rājūnam sattasahassāni sattasatāni satta cha rājāno honti* (*Jāt* No 149, p. 504).

matical rule either in Sanskrit or Pali for connecting *rājuka* with *rājan*.⁶ Thirdly, Aśoka's grant of authority to the *rājukas* over hundreds of thousands of people does not suffice to show that they were "the ordinary provincial governors".

II *Prādeśikas*. The most natural explanation of this term, based upon its derivation from *pradeśa* (a small geographical region), is local or provincial official. The slightly higher title *padesarāja* (Sanskrit *pradeśarāja*) meaning the ruler of a province or a small kingdom is contrasted in a Pali canonical text (*Vin.* III 47) with a world-ruler on the one hand, and with the official in charge of a district or a division and other officials. Less probable, as being based upon the rare use of *pradeśa* in the sense of 'report', with which Dr. Raychaudhuri compares that of 'counsel' or 'instruction' in a text (V 26.3) of the *Vishnu Purāṇa*, is Dr. F. W. Thomas's interpretation of *prādeśika* as 'reporter'. The identification of *prādeśikas* with Kauṭilya's *pradeshtṛis* rests upon an earlier interpretation of Dr. F. W. Thomas which was afterwards discarded by the same scholar, while the suggestion that the *prādeśikas* in contrast with the *rājukas* were officers of the local administration lacks corroboration.⁷

III. *Yutas*. The reference in Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* (II 9) to the *yuktas*' opportunities for misappropriating the government revenue, and in Manu (VIII 34) to their function of recovering lost property justifies Barua's interpretation of Aśoka's *yutas* as having charge of State-funds and storehouses. Similarly his explanation of *yutas* as the subordinate secretariat staff accompanying the *rājukas* and *prādeśikas* on tour amplifies Hultzsch's suggestion that they were secretaries employed for codifying royal orders in the office of the *mahāmātras*.

Let us next turn to the Junāgaḍh rock inscription (*Ep. Ind.* Vol VIII pp. 36-49) of Rudradāman, the Śaka ruler of Western India in the second century A.D., the object of which is to record the restoration of a famous artificial lake called Sudarśana ('The Lake Beautiful') by the high-minded Great Satrap for the benefit of his subjects. The Lake, we are told in the course of this narrative, had been caused to be excavated (lit. 'made') by the *rāshṭriya* of the Maurya King Chandragupta, and was adorned with conduits 'for the sake of Aśoka Maurya by the Yavana king Tushāspa when governing.' The interpretation of these historical allusions has given rise to strikingly different views regarding the status of the two officers mentioned above in relation to Maurya administration. According to Dr. Beni Prasad (*The State in Ancient*

⁶ For the derivation of Skt. and Pali *rājaka* from *rājan* vide Pāṇini V 3 85 and *PTS. Dict.* s.v. respectively.

⁷ The derivation of *prādeśika* from *pradeśa* is supported by the authority of (a) Kern (*JRAS* 1880 p. 393) (b) F. W. Thomas (*JRAS* 1915, p. 112)

correcting his earlier identification with *pradeshtṛis* (*JRAS* 1914 pp. 385-6), and (c) Hultzsch (*Corpus...* p. 5 n. 3). Similarly Bloch, (*Les Inscriptions d' Aśoka*, p. 95n) translates *prādeśikas* as 'le provincial'.

India p. 119) and Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar (*Aśoka* p. 30), Pushyagupta and Tushāspa were provincial governors of Surāshtra under Chandragupta Maurya and Aśoka respectively, the former scholar holding that they had the respective designations of *rāshṭriya* and *adhishṭhāya* (sic) and the latter stating that they belonged to the second type of heads of provinces who in contrast with the Prince-viceroy were not selected from the royal family. Putting a more original interpretation upon the above, Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri (*PHAI* p. 209) holds that Pushyagupta was 'a sort of Imperial High Commissioner' in Surāshtra with its group of *rājās* under the paramount rule of Chandragupta Maurya, and that he occupied as such a position in this province similar to that of Lord Cromer in Egypt in recent times. Tushāspa's relation to Emperor Aśoka, we are further told by the same scholar, was similar to that of Raja Man Singh of Amber, governor of Bengal under Akbar, and that of the Śākya-rāja to the Kosala King Prasenajit. The most original view is that of Dr. B. M. Barua (*Aśoka* pp. 148-54, 190) who thinks that Pushyagupta was 'the mayor, business-magnate and influential landlord of Girnar' in Chandragupta's time, and that Tushāspa came into power not in Aśoka's time, but after the termination of his rule.

Let us begin our discussion of the above views with reference to the interpretation of Dr. Barua which is based upon his own explanation (of the crucial term *rāshṭriya*) and reading (*ante* in place of the usual *kṛite*) in the inscription. If this interpretation were to be accepted as correct, it is evident that the whole passage would cease to have any bearing upon the administration of the Mauryas. As regards the significance of *rāshṭriya* Barua's argument is mainly founded upon the reference to cognate titles in a *Jātaka* text and in two passages from the late (5th century A.D.?) commentaries of Buddhaghosa on the Pali canon. Now admitting with Barua the equivalence of Aśoka's *rāshṭriya* to the *rāshṭrika-mahārāshṭrika-rāshṭrapāla* of his quoted texts, we have first to state that the *Jātaka* passage refers to the *senāpati* ('general') at the head of the *amachchas* ('ministers' or 'high officials') and the *purohita* at the head of the *Brāhmaṇas*, and lastly the *raṭṭhika* (Skt. *rāshṭrika*) along with (and not as 'the foremost' among) the *negamas* (bankers, business-magnates and rich landowners).⁸ This probably means that *raṭṭhikas* held the same rank as the *negamas*, unlike the *senāpati* and the *purohita* who stood at the head of their respective classes. Again, the reference in Buddhaghosa's first passage to the clothes and equipment of the *rāshṭriyas*, who are described as being 'gorgeously dressed, holding swords and the like in their hands', and joining as such the *mahāmātras* and the *Brāhmaṇas* during a State-drive of the Magadha king Ajātaśatru, suggests that they were more probably a class of high officers (in contrast with the ordinary officials called *mahāmātras*) than

⁸ The passage in the original (*Jāt.* No. 525 p. 178) is as follows:—*senāpati-pamukhāni asīti-amachcha-sahassāni*

purohita-pamukhāni saṭṭhi-brāhmaṇa-sahassāni raṭṭhika-negamādayo bahu pakkosāpetva.

mayors and so forth. This suggestion is confirmed by the description in the second passage of a Kuru king's visit to a saint 'with a retinue consisting of the *mahāmātras*, the *mahārāshṭrikas* and such like persons of higher and higher rank'. In the next place Buddhaghosa's definition of a *rāshṭrapāla* family in his second passage as 'that of which the head was capable of maintaining and restoring the peace and order in a territory or any portion thereof in the event of party factions, capable of coping with or quelling any popular commotion or disturbance', definitely suits a high official (corresponding to the *rāshṭrapāla-rāshṭramukhya* of Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*) instead of a business-magnate and the like. Fourthly, when Barua finds in the title Vaiśya applied to Pushyagupta a confirmation of his own interpretation of *rāshṭriya*, he forgets that it would in the circumstances be quite tautologous. On the contrary, the title would be completely apposite with the use of *rāshṭriya* as an administrative designation, in the sense that Pushyagupta the Vaiśya had to be distinguished from his namesake of another (Kshatriya?) caste holding a similar high office. It remains to mention that Kielhorn's reading *kṛite* ('for the sake of') which has been followed by all other scholars is exactly in keeping with the known humanitarian activities of Aśoka, while Barua's amended reading *ante* ('at the end of') would seem to be quite pointless from the point of view of the generation to whom the whole record is addressed.⁹

Passing to the other interpretations of the present passage we have to state in the first place that there is only a single reference in a Pali canonical text to a king of Surāshṭra called Piṅgala ruling under Bindusāra's and Aśoka's suzerainty.¹⁰ This, we think, is the chief basis for the designation of Pushyagupta and Tushāspa as provincial governors of Surāshṭra under Chandragupta Maurya and Aśoka respectively. As for Dr. Raychaudhuri's ingenious suggestion (PHAI p. 237) that the Surāshṭras were included among the autonomous tribes and peoples of the Māuryas Empire so that Pushyagupta was a sort of Imperial High Commissioner in Surāshṭra with its group of dependent chiefs, we have to remember that the extract from Kauṭilya XI 1 quoted by this scholar mentions the Surāshṭras as an instance of the non-political (*vārttāśaśtropajīvin*) as distinguished from the political (*rājaśabdopajīvin*) communities (*saṃghas*), while the list of autonomous peoples in Aśoka's own inscriptions refers in general terms to the peoples of Western India

⁹ We may quote here the text and tr. of Rudradāman's inscription as given by Kielhorn (*Ep. Ind.* Vol. VIII, pp. 36-49)...(s)y-ārthe Mauryasya rājñah Candrag(u)p(ta)s-(ya) (r)āṣṭriyena (V) aiśyena Puṣyaguptena kṛitam Aśokasya Mauryasya te yavanarājena Tuṣāspen=ādhiṣṭhāya prañalibhir=ala(m)kṛta(m)...“for the sake of...ordered to be made by the Vaiśya Pushyagupta, the provincial governor

of the Maurya king Chandragupta: adorned with conduits for Aśoka the Maurya by the Yavana king Tushāspa while governing.”

¹⁰ Vide the ref. in the Pali canonical work¹ the *Petavatthu* (and its commentary the *Paramatthadīpanī*) first noticed by Professor Charan Das Chatterji in his paper *A historical character in the reign of Aśoka Maurya* (*D. R. Bhandarkar Volume*, pp. 330 ff.).

(*Aparānta*) without making any special reference to the people of Surāshtra. As regards the historical parallel drawn by Dr. Raychaudhuri (PHAI p. 237) between Tushāspa's relation to Aśoka and that of Rājā Man Singh to Akbar as well as that of the Śākya king to Prasenajit, it may be said that while they are plausible enough, the Śākya king by contrast appears to have held his office in hereditary succession besides possessing ethnic and cultural affinities with the paramount ruler.

What, then, is the significance of the title *rāshṭriya* applied to Pushyagupta and the gerund *adhishṭhāya* to Tushāspa in the inscription above-named? As regards the former title its etymological or lexical meaning is of little help. Thus Pāṇini, while giving his rule (IV 2.93) for the formation of this word, understands it in a sufficiently wide sense to mean even one who was born in a kingdom. In Amara's well-known lexicon (V 14) it has the non-political sense of the king's brother-in-law. Among parallel terms the Skt *Rāshṭrika* (Pali *raṭṭhika*, Aśokān *raṭhika* with variants) is used in the general sense of the inhabitant of a kingdom, although it also means an official. The titles *rāshṭrapāla* and *rāshṭra-mukhya* in Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* seem to mean 'a district officer in the interior of the kingdom' in contrast with the *antapāla* ('Warden of the Marches') and a *puramukhya* ('officer in charge of a town'). May it be that the *rāshṭriya* of Chandragupta Maurya held charge of a small district in Gujarat under the Maurya viceroy of Western India with his headquarters at Ujjayinī? This supposition is not negatived by the fact that the *rāshṭrapāla* and the *antapāla* belong to the same official grade as the prince in Kauṭilya's 'Civil List' (V 3), for the difference between the Aśokan and the *Arthaśāstra* systems of administration is all the difference between an imperial type of polity based essentially on the contrast between the Central Government and the provinces, and the traditional type of a small monarchy founded primarily on the dichotomy between the administrative units of the town and the rural area. Turning to the official position of Tushāspa we may observe that his relation to Aśoka is described in Rudradāman's inscription quite differently from that of Pushyagupta to Chandragupta Maurya. Indeed, we may point out, notwithstanding the high authority of Kielhorn who renders the verb in the inscription named above as 'administering' or 'governing', that *adhishṭhā* bears the sense of 'to direct, to preside over, to superintend,' just as the corresponding Pali verb *adhiṭṭhā* means 'to undertake, practise, perform, look after, to celebrate.'¹¹ May we then take the reference in Rudradāman's inscription to mean that Tushāspa was entrusted by Aśoka with superintendence of the grand irrigation work on the lake excavated by the order of his grandfather? If so, there can be no question of his being charged with the government of the province under the Imperial Mauryas.

¹¹ For the above interpretation vide *Dict. s.v.*
Apte's *Skt-Eng. Dict.* and *PTS*.

B. Period of the Imperial Guptas

The rule of the Imperial Guptas was marked by some striking developments of the old official nomenclature. While the most characteristic administrative titles in the *Arthaśāstra* are *sannidhātā*, *saṁāhartā*, *pradeshtā*, *nāgaraka*, *sthānika* and *gopa* as well as *adhyakshas* of various classes, and those in the Aśokan edicts are *mahāmātras*, *prādesikas*, *rājukas* and *yutas*, the corresponding titles in the records of the Gupta emperors borrowed in some cases from their immediate predecessors are *balādhikṛita*, *senāpati*, *daṇḍanāyaka*, *kumārāmātya*, *uparika* and *sāmdhi-vigrahika*. The Gupta Emperors further adopted on a large scale, after the sporadic examples set by their Kushan, Sātavāhana and Ikshvāku predecessors belonging to Northern, Western and Eastern India respectively, a group of official titles with the honorific prefix *mahān* ('the chief') added to their names. Such are the titles *mahādaṇḍanāyaka*, *mahāpratihāra*, *mahāśvapati*, *mahāpīlupati*, *mahābalādhikṛita*, *mahāsāmdhivigrahika*, *mahākshapaṭalika* and *mahākārtākrītika*.¹²

What is the significance of the above changes? There is probably no reason to think that they indicate a very striking departure from the traditional methods of bureaucratic administration. In so far as the new administrative titles with an honorific prefix are concerned they would seem at first to represent a general tendency to upgrade the older offices—a movement with which may be matched the simultaneous exaltation of the royal office. It is, however, equally probable that there was under the Imperial Guptas an attempt to strengthen the administrative organisation by the wholesale creation of a superior cadre of civil and military officers above the existing lower grade officials. Interpreted in this way it would appear that the *mahābalādhikṛita* of the Gupta period, corresponding to the *mahāsenāpati* of the Sātavāhana kings, controlled a staff of subordinate officers like the *mahāśvapati* ('chief officer of cavalry'), the *bhaṭāśvapati* ('officer in charge of the regular cavalry'), the *mahāpīlupati* ('chief officer in charge of elephants'), not to speak of the *senāpati* and the *balādhikṛita* (generals). Similarly the *mahāpratihāra* ('lit. chief door-keeper' but probably meaning 'chief of the palace-guards') controlled his staff of *pratihāras*. The *mahākshapaṭalika* was the chief officer in charge of the Records office. For the rest the *mantrin* ('chief minister'),

¹² For administrative titles of the Gupta period vide (a) clay-seals from Basarh with legends in Gupta characters (*ASR* 1903-04 and 1913-14); (b) clay-seals from Bhita as above (*ASR* 1911-12); (c) *CII*, Vol III nos 1, 12, 31 etc (d) *Ep. Ind.* Vol. X p. 15, and p. 71, *Ibid* Vol XV p. 130f, Vol XIX p. 21 (e) Hirananda Sastri, *Nalanda and its epigraphic material*, p. 35. For earlier refs. vide (a) *Ep Ind.* Vol VIII pp. 67 and 94; *ibid* Vol XIV p. 153 (*mahāsenāpati* with the feminine *mahāsenā-*

pātnī of the Sātavāhana kings); (b) *Ep. Ind.* Vol IX p. 242, *ibid* Vol XX pp. 17-18, *ibid* XXIV pp. 20-26; *JPASB* pp. 343f (*mahādaṇḍanāyaka* of the Imperial Kushans as well as of the Ikshvāku and Brīhatphalāyana kings of Eastern Deccan). It may be added that the seals and sealings from Basarh are given in a serial order in the lists of Bloch (*ASR* 1903-04) and Spooner (*ibid* 1913-14), and those from Bhita are similarly enumerated in the list of Marshall (*ibid* 1911-12).

whose office may be traced back to the late Vedic period, was the head of the civil administration, while the *sāndhivigrahika* (an innovation of the Gupta period) was 'the minister of peace or war', or more generally, 'the foreign minister'.

In the group of administrative titles mentioned above two names stand out conspicuously above the rest, as they have formed the subject of very different interpretations among scholars in recent times. These are the offices of *kumārāmātya* and *mahādaṇḍanāyaka* (along with its component *daṇḍanāyaka*). It will be convenient for us to deal with the connotation of these officers one after another. The first of these titles appears to have been introduced by the Imperial Guptas, and it survived their downfall for some considerable time thereafter. Usually it has been held to mean 'the minister of the Crown-Prince or the heir-apparent', while alternatively it has been explained to mean 'one who has been an officer (*amātya*) since his youth'. While both explanations are etymologically correct, the former apparently has its historical justification in the title *rāyāmacha* (Skt. *rājāmātya*) known to the administration of the Sātavāhana rulers of Western India, and the latter is supported philologically by the analogous term *kumārādhyāpaka* meaning 'a teacher while still a youth'.¹³ Whatever might be the origin of the term, its true significance can only be understood from the context in which it occurs in the records of the Gupta Emperors and their immediate successors. These records may be conveniently numbered in chronological order as follows:—

I. Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta (*CII* Vol III pp. 6 f). Here the composer of the panegyric describes himself as *sāndhivigrahika* ('foreign minister'), *kumārāmātya* and *mahādaṇḍanāyaka*, who was the son of another *mahādaṇḍanāyaka*, and further as a servant (*dāsa*) of the Emperor whose intellect had been awakened by constant attendance on His Majesty.

¹³ Current interpretations of *Kumārāmātya*;—(a) 'Councillor of the Crown-Prince' (Fleet, *CII*, Vol III p. 16n); (b) Prince's minister' (Bloch, *ASR* 1903-04, p. 103); (c) minister of the Prince-vice-roy' (Beni Prasad, *The State in Ancient India*, p. 296); (d) 'the prince's or the heir-apparent's minister' (Hirananda Sastri, *Nalanda...* p. 35); (e) 'One who has been in the service of the king from the time when he was a boy' (Bloch, *Ep. Ind.* Vol X p. 50); (f) '*amātya* since his youth i.e. since the time of joining service' (Altekar, *SGAI* p. 339); (g) 'cadet-minister' (H. C. Raychaudhuri, *PHAI* p. 562); (h) 'one who has hereditary right to a high office of state (Dr. R. C. Majumdar and Dr. Radhagovinda Basak in *History of Bengal*, Vol I p. 284); (i) 'officer resembling to a great extent

the class of I.C.S. officers who sometimes work in the district, sometimes in the provincial or central secretariat, and sometimes become members of the Government itself' (A. S. Altekar in *The Vākātaka-Gupta Age*, p. 282; (j) the minister of the Yuvarāja (Dr. Kane *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol III p. 115). For refs. to *rāyāmacha* and *kumārādhyāpaka* vide *Ep. Ind.* Vol VIII & no. 9 and Monier-Williams's *Dict.* s.v. respectively. For late refs. to *kumārāmātya* and *mahākumārāmātya*, vide (a) (*II*) vol III p. 165 *Ep. Ind* Vol XI p. 287, *ibid* Vol XXIII p. 201 (*kumārāmātyas* of Maitrakas of Valabhi and local dynasties of Orissa); (b) *Ep. Ind.* Vol XXIX pp. 8, 12 and 56 (*mahākumārāmātyas* of Mahīpāla I and Vīgrahapāla III).

II. Karamdanda inscription of the reign of Kumāragupta (*Ep. Ind.* Vol X pp. 71-2). In this record a donor describes himself as the *mantri-kumārāmātya* who afterwards became also a *mahābalādhikṛita* (supreme commander of the army) and who was the son of a *mantri-kumārāmātya* of Chandragupta II.

III-IV. Damodarpur copper-plate inscriptions (nos. I and 2. *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XV p. 129 and *ibid.* Vol. XV p. 132 and Vol. XVII p. 193) belonging to the reign of Kumāragupta I and bearing dates in the Gupta era which correspond to A.D. 443-444 and 449-450. Here we read that the province (*bhukti*) of Puṇḍravardhana (North Bengal) was being governed at that time by a person bearing the title of *uparika mahārāja*, while the office of the district head-quarters (*adhishṭhānādhikaraṇa*) in the Koṭivarsha district was being administered by a *kumārāmātya* of his choice. Other copper-plate inscriptions in the same group, however, one of which has preserved intact its seal with mention of the office of the district head-quarters, prove that the district was being administered in the immediately following years by officers bearing the titles of *āyuktaka* and *vishayapati*, or else by the provincial governor himself.

V-VI. Two clay-seals from Basarh (ancient Vaiśālī) (*ASR.* 1902-04, p. 109) with legends in Gupta characters, of which one belonged to the office of the *uparika* of Tirabhukti, and the other to that of the *kumārāmātya* of Tira (capital city of Tirabhukti?).

VII. A similar clay-seal from the same locality (*ASR.* 1913-14, p. 434) purporting to belong to the office of the *kumārāmātya* at the Kuṇḍa called Vaiśālī.

VIII-IX. Two similar clay-seals from Nālandā (Hirananda Sāstri in *Nalanda*...pp. 51-53) of a somewhat later date than the foregoing. Of these one belonged to the office of the *kumārāmātya* in the Magadha province, and the other to that of the *kumārāmātya* in the Nagara province.

X. A similar seal from Bhita (*ASR.* 1911-12 p. 52) belonging to a *kumārāmātya* who describes himself as meditating on the feet of a person holding the joint offices of *mahāśvapati* ('chief officer of cavalry') and *mahādaṇḍanāyaka*.

XI-XVI. Six similar clay-seals from Basarh (*ASR.* 1903-04 pp. 107-08) of which three belonged to the office of the *kumārāmātya* attached to the *yuvarāja* (Crown-Prince), two belonged to that of the *kumārāmātya* attached to the same personage called by an exalted prefix (*Śrī*) and suffix (*bhaṭṭāraka*), and the last belonged to the office of the *kumārāmātya* attached to the Emperor himself (indicated by his usual imperial title).

XVII. A copper-plate inscription (*Ep. Ind.* Vol X p. 12) of a feudatory chief of the year 232 of the Gupta era corresponding to A.D. 551-52. Here the chief describes himself as a *kumārāmātya* meditating on the feet of the gods and the preceptors.

XVIII. A copper-plate inscription (*Ep. Ind.* Vol XV p. 19) of a chief

called Lokanātha, who reigned in East Bengal in the latter half of the seventh century A.D. In this record the seal bears in characters of the Gupta period the legend *kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇasya* ('of the office of the *kumārāmātya*'), while alongside is written in characters of the seventh century the legend *Lokanāthasya* ('of Lokanātha').

In the above nos. I and XI-XVI evidently from one group, nos. II and X form a second group, nos. III-IX constitute a third group, while the fourth and last group consists of nos. XVII-XVIII. The first group, we think, shows that *kumārāmātyas* were attached severally to the personal staff of the Emperor and the Crown-Prince, and what is more, they held charge of corresponding office establishments. The second group proves that *kumārāmātyas* were similarly attached to the personal staff of the higher civil and military officers like the chief minister and the chief cavalry officer. The third group shows that the *kumārāmātya* at least in Eastern India held a distinctive place in the Gupta provincial administration, being in charge of the office of the metropolitan city (unnamed *adhishṭhāna* in Koṭivarsha, Tira in Tirabhukti and lastly, Vaiśālī) of the province. This of course does not exclude officers with other titles holding the same jurisdiction. The fourth group probably indicates that the old Gupta official title was still being used by the dynasts arising on the ruins of the Gupta Empire in the same way as the Nawab Viziers of Oudh functioned during the decline of the Mughal Empire.¹⁴ It follows from the above that the *kumārāmātya* was the distinctive designation of an officer of the Gupta Empire, who was charged at least in the Eastern provinces with the administration of the metropolitan city. The term was likewise applied to an officer on the personal staff (in fact a sort of Private Secretary) of the Emperor, the Crown-Prince and the high officials.

What, then, is the significance of the office under discussion? In the opinion of Drs. R. C. Majumdar and R. G. Basak (*History of Bengal* published by the Dacca University, p. 284) the *kumārāmātya* was the generic name of a class of officials some of whom were directly under the king or the Crown-Prince. According to Dr. A. C. Altekar (*SGAI*

¹⁴ The legends on the seals of the above groups of inscriptions are quoted below by way of clarification of our statement.

(a) *Tirabhukty-uparik-ādhikaraṇasya* and *Tirakumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇa* (in Nos. V-VI);

(b) *Vaiśālī-nāma kuṇḍe kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇasya* (in No. VII);

(c) *Magadha-bhuktau kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇasya* and *Nagara-bhuktau kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇasya* (in Nos. VIII-IX);

(d) *mahāśvapati-mahādaṇḍanāyaka-Vishṇurakṣita-pādānudhyāta-kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇasya* (in No. X);

(e) *Yuvarājapādiya-kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇa*, *Sri-yuvarāja-bhaṭṭāraka-pādiya-kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇasya* and *Sri-paramabhaṭṭāraka-pādiya kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇa* (in nos. XI-XVI) *kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇasya* and *Lokanāthasya* (in No. XVIII). In nos. V-VI and VIII-IX mentioned above the difference of case-ending of the name of the province (possessive in the case of *uparika* and locative in the case of the *kumārāmātya*) suggests that while the jurisdiction of the former officer extended over the whole province, that of the latter was limited to one select portion alone.

p. 339) the *kumārāmātyas* were the members of the Superior Civil Service corresponding to the I. C. S. and I. A. S of our own times. With more originality the late Mr. R. D. Banerji (*Age of the Imperial Guptas* pp. 73-74) took the reference in nos. XI-XVI to mean that some of the *kumārāmātyas* were held to be equal in rank to the princes of the royal blood, and others were held to be equal to the heir of the Emperor, while others again were equal in rank to His Majesty the Emperor. Now as regards Banerji's interpretation, it is based on the twofold argument that *pāda* in the singular means 'equal to' and that *yuvarāja-bhaṭṭāraka* signifies the real heir-apparent as distinguished from the *yuvarājas* who were the younger princes of the royal family. This is open to the following objections. Firstly, the termination *pādāḥ* (in the plural) is a well-known honorific designation added to the names or titles of persons. No authority has been cited to illustrate the use of *pāda* (in the singular) in the sense of 'kalpa' which by the way means 'a little less than' (and not 'equal to' as understood by Mr. Banerji). Secondly, even if we could understand the termination *pāda* in Mr. Banerji's sense, the compound *Yuvarājapādiya-kumārāmātyādhikaraṇa* cannot mean '(Of) the office of the *kumārāmātya* equal in rank to the *Yuvarāja*', for the affix *chha* (*īya*) has always a possessive sense. Thirdly, the distinction drawn between *Yuvarāja* and *Yuvarāja-bhaṭṭāraka* has not the slightest evidence in its favour. As *Yuvarāja* by itself always means the 'Crown-Prince', it is natural to take *Yuvarāja-bhaṭṭāraka*, 'the lord, the Crown-Prince' as an honorific form of the simple term *Yuvarāja*. Fourthly, the conclusion to which Mr. Banerji's arguments lead him, namely, that certain *kumārāmātyas* were equal in rank even to the Emperors—a fact which he himself admits to be unparalleled in the history of ancient or modern times—is enough to prove the untenableness of his interpretation. As for the other interpretations, the contention that the *kumārāmātyas* were members of the Superior Civil Service (Dr. A. S. Altekar) or that they indicated a generic class of officials (Dr. R. C. Majumdar), is belied by the fact mentioned above, namely that their office was sufficiently distinctive to be used by later dynasts who rose to power during or after the downfall of the Gupta empire. It would appear from the above discussion that the *kumārāmātyas* were a distinct class of officials who could be selected for the central as well as the local administration of the Imperial Guptas. That their rank was different from (and in fact inferior to) that of the *mantrin* or ('the minister proper') is indicated by the joint title *mantri-kumārāmātya* in one of the records mentioned above.

Coming to the second term *mahādaṇḍanāyaka* along with its constituent *daṇḍanāyaka*, we have to state that these terms have been variously taken to mean a military, a police and a judicial officer.¹⁵ Now it is

¹⁵ Current interpretations of *daṇḍanāyaka*;—(a) an officer of police (Marshall, *ASR* 1911-12 p. 55, and D.R. Bhandarkar, *ASR* 1914-15 p. 82);

(b) 'a judge' (N. G. Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol III p. 185)

(c) 'a magistrate' (R. G. Basak, *Ep Ind.* Vol XII p. 43) and (d) 'officers of

true that *daṇḍa* etymologically means both the army and the executive branch of the administration symbolically represented by the rod of punishment. Accordingly *daṇḍanāyaka* is explained in the great *St. Petersburg Lexicon* (s.v.) alternatively as "Richter" and "Anführer einer Heeresäule, einer Kolonne". It may, however, be pointed out that *daṇḍanāyaka* is understood in the standard Indian lexicons (e.g. *Abhidhānachintāmaṇi* II 9 and *Kalpadrakoṣa* (I 6 and V 17) generally in the sense of *senānī* (commander). The *Brihatsamhitā* (71-74) which belongs to the late Gupta period significantly brackets together *daṇḍanāyaka* with *senāpati* ('general'). The parallel term *daṇḍamukhya* is taken in Kāmandaka's *Nītisāra* (XVIII 49) (a work which may be assigned to the Gupta period) in the sense of 'a general'.¹⁶ On the whole, then, we may take it that *daṇḍanāyaka* with the higher title *mahādaṇḍanāyaka* was applied in the Gupta administrative nomenclature to the military commanders and the commanders-in-chief respectively. Of the *daṇḍanāyaka* being in charge of 'local military units in the districts', there is in our ancient records no trace.

C. Period of the Pāla kings of Bengal

Among the numerous titles of administrative officials commemorated in the formula of land-grants of the Pāla kings and their Eastern contemporaries (8th to 12th centuries A.D.), there are three very rare terms which because of the extreme obscurity of their connotation have been left largely or wholly unexplained by the editors of those records. These are *khola*, *mahākṛtuka* and *khaṇḍapāla* (with its equivalent *khaṇḍarakṣā*). It seems desirable if only for the purpose of lexicography to attempt a clear explanation of these elusive terms.¹⁷

the status of colonels stationed in different districts in charge of the local units' (Altekar, *SGAI*, p. 189) Interpretations of *mahādaṇḍanāyakā*:— (a) 'a military title' (Fleet, *CII* Vol III, p. 10n); (b) 'a judge' (Bloch, *ASR* 1903-04, p. 109) (c) 'chief officer of police' (Marshall, *ASR*, 1911-12, p. 54); (d) 'prefect of police' (Vogel, *Antiquities of Chamba*, Part I, p. 23); (e) 'a high, probably judicial, officer' (Vogel, *Ep. Ind.* Vol XX p. 32) and (f) 'a great general' (Lüders, *Ep. Ind.* Vol IX p. 242 and vol XXIV p. 206).

¹⁶ With the above interpretation we may compare the explanation of the parallel term *daṇḍapāla* in *Vaijayantī* p. 105 'as commander of the whole army'.

¹⁷ Refs.—(a) Khalimpur-grant of Dharma-pāla, *Ep. Ind.* Vol IV (*Khola*); (b) Pañchobh-grant of Paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja Parameśvara Mahāmāṇḍalika Saṅgrāmagupta *JBORS* Vol. V p. 502f (*mahākṛtuka* and

khaṇḍapāla) (c) Ramganj copper-plate inscription of Mahāmāṇḍalika Śvaraghosh, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol III p. 149f (*khola*, *khaṇḍapāla* and *mahākṛtuka*); (d) Nālandā and Monghya-grants of Devapāla and Bhāgalpur grant of Nārāyaṇapāla, *Ep. Ind.* Vol XVII, *ibid* Vol XVIII; *IA* Vol XV (*khaṇḍarakṣā*); (f) Antirigam copper-plate inscription of Jayabhāñjēdeva *Ep. Ind.* Vol XIX p. 41f (*khaṇḍapāla* with our amended reading *khaṇḍapāla-purañjaya-puraḥsarāṇ* for *Khaṇḍapāla-Purañjaya-purasarāḥ* in the original instead of *Khaṇḍapāla-Purañjaya-sūraṇ* suggested by the editor Dr. Hirananda Sastri), it being argued that our reading is justified by the immediately preceding phrase *Virabhañjādevaḥ-akṣapaṭālī-Vajradatta-sandhivigrahi-Punnāga prathihāra* etc. while the latter reading which makes out *Khaṇḍapāla* and *Purnajaya* to be two proper names is

I. *Khola*. The clue to the proper identification of the above term has to be sought in the works of the Jaina canonical and post-canonical literature which, as is well known, retain many words of the contemporary vernaculars. To begin with *khola*, it is included in a list of vernacular (*deśī*) words in Hemachandra's *Deśināmamālā*. But none of his synonyms, namely *Laghugardabhaka* ('the small ass') and *vastraikadeśa* (a piece of cloth), suits our present context. On the other hand the great Jaina lexicon *Abhidhāna-Rājendra* gives among the synonyms of *khola* the generic term *rājapurusha* ('royal official'), while the handy *Ardha-Māgadhi Dictionary* of Muni Śrī Ratnachandraji gives it in the more specific sense of *guptachara* ('spy').¹⁸ Either of these senses would admirably suit our present requirement, for *khola* is immediately preceded or followed in the two inscriptions concerned by the *dūta* (messenger) and the *gamāgamika* (runner?).

II. *Mahākaṭuka*. The term *kaṭuka* occurs in two passages of Bāṇa's *Harshacharita*, the commentator Śaṅkara interpreting it in the first case as *hastipakayoktrā* ('elephant-rider') and giving it in the second instance the doubtful sense of *tikshṇa* ('brave') and *pratīhāra* ('chamberlain').¹⁹ Evidently on the basis of the last interpretation, Cowell and Thomas translated the second passage *kaphavikāriṇa iva dine dine kaṭukairudvejya-māna* as 'like a phlegmatic patient he is daily worried by acrid door-keepers.' It is, however, extremely doubtful from all that we know of the royal door-keeper' (or the chamberlain's) duties whether he may be taken as the type of a vexatious official, such as was evidently the author's intention. Here again the clue is found in the valuable Jaina literature. The *Abhidhāna-Rājendra*, quoting from the *Chūrṇī* of *Niśīthasūtra*, gives for *kaḍuga* (evidently the Prakrit form of Skt. *kaṭuka*) the synonym *daṇḍaparichchedakārin* which may be translated as 'one who measures (proportionately deals out?) punishment'.²⁰ This probably means an officer entrusted with the administration of criminal justice. It is evident that an officer of this type has so many opportunities for misuse of his power as to make his name a by-word for oppression in the olden times. This has apparently been done by Bāṇa in the passage mentioned above. With this explanation in mind we may offer a tentative interpretation of the term *mahākaṭuka* of the land-grants. We suggest that in Eastern India by the eleventh and twelfth centuries (the date to which our present inscriptions have been assigned on palaeographical grounds) the cadre of *kaṭukas* (criminal judges?) which may be traced back otherwise at least to the seventh century A.D. had been reorganised so as to raise this officer with a higher designation to the

negated by the editor's reading of the following word (*śurān* in the plural instead of the dual *śurāu*).

¹⁸ For these synonyms vide (a) *Deśināmamālā*, Bombay ed. 1892, pp. 228, 250; (b) *Abhidhāna-Rājendra*, s.v.; (c)

Ardha-Māgadhi Dict. s.v.

¹⁹ For Śaṅkara's explanation of *kaṭuka* in *Harshacharita*, vide F. W. Thomas's article *Two lists of words from Bāṇa's Harshacharita* in *JRAS* 1899 p. 503.

²⁰ Vide *Abhidhāna-Rājendra*, s.v. *kaḍuga*.

status of other first-class officers. It is, therefore, quite in the fitness of things that the *mahākāṭuka* is found in both inscriptions²¹ in juxtaposition with other more or less high dignitaries with the same prefix *mahān* ('chief') attached to their names.

III. *Khaṇḍapāla-khaṇḍaraksha*. The interpretation of this term is a matter of considerable difficulty. Leaving aside the current translations as 'Superintendent of repairs' (N. G. Majumdar in *Inscriptions of Bengal* Vol III Part X p. 184 and R. G. Basak in the Bengali periodical *Pravāsi* for Āśvina 1343 B. S.) or 'Superintendent of municipal wards' (J. N. Sikdar and Amareswar Thakur in *JBORS* Vol V pp. 582 f) which are evidently based upon its supposed etymological connexion with the root-word *khaṇḍa*, we find that the great Jaina lexicon gives for *khaṇḍa-rakkha* (Prakrit equivalent of Skt. *khaṇḍaraksha*) the synonyms *dāṇḍa-pāśika* ('police officer') and *śulka-pāla* ('customs officer'). These synonyms are repeated in the *Ardha-Māgadhī Dictionary* which mentions under the captions *khaṇḍarakkhā* the Hindi synonyms *dāṇi* ('customs inspector') and *kotvāl* ('police officer'). The term is explained in the sense of *śulka-pāla* by Leumann in his edition of the Jaina canonical work the *Aupapātikasūtra*²². None of the above explanations suits the context of the above-quoted Pāla inscriptions; for there we find *dāṇḍika*, *dāṇḍa-pāśika* and *śaulkika* figuring side by side with *khaṇḍaraksha* and *khaṇḍa-pāla*.²³ A way out of the difficulty may perhaps be found in the juxtaposition of the titles of administrative officers in the records mentioned above. In the three Pāla land-grants the titles are given in the following sequence—*prāntapāla* ('warden of the marches'), *koṭṭapāla* ('officer in charge of the fortress or the fortified city') and *khaṇḍaraksha*. In the fourth land-grant mentioned above, that of the feudatory chief Īśvara-ghoṣha, the sequence is *antaḥpratihāra* ('door-keeper of the inner apartments'), *dāṇḍapāla* ('a police or military officer') and *khaṇḍapāla*. It is again not without significance that in the later Pāla land-grants²⁴ the title *aṅgaraksha* (evidently a military title) is substituted for *khaṇḍa-raksha* of the older records. In the light of the above discussion we may tentatively suggest that *khaṇḍapāla-khaṇḍaraksha* was a military office of nearly the same status as the *prāntapāla*, the *koṭṭapāla* and the *dāṇḍapāla*.²⁵

²¹ Vide ref. under the heads (b) and (C) in footnote 17 above.

²² For refs. vide (a) *Abhidhāna-Rajendra*, s.v. (b) *Ardha-Māgadhī Dict.*, s.v.

²³ Vide Leumann (*Das Aupapātikasūtra*, *erstes upāṅga der Jaina*, I Teil, glossar).

²⁴ Refs. to *aṅgaraksha* in later Pāla inscriptions:—(a) Bangarh-grant of Mahipāla I (*Ep. Ind.* Vol XIV p. 324), (b) Belwa-grant of Mahipāla I (*Ep. Ind.*

Vol XXIX p. 8); (c) and (d) Belwa and Bangarh-grants of Vīgrahapāla III (*Ep. Ind.* Vol XXIX pp. 12 and 56); (e) Manahali-grant of Mahadanapāla (*JASB* Vol LXIX Part I p. 68).

²⁵ For juxtaposition of *dāṇḍika*, *dāṇḍa-pāśika* and *śaulkika* with *khaṇḍapāla-khaṇḍaraksha*, vide also Vogel, *Antiquities of the Chamba State*, pp. 166, 199.

Appendix

A Note on the Orthography of the Early Brāhmī Inscriptions in the matter of indication of the Double Consonants

By Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji, M.A., D.Litt.

T. W. Rhys Davids already noted in his *Buddhist India* (pp. 130-1) that in the early orthography of the inscriptions what was actually a double consonant in pronunciation was written by a single consonant: *s k¹ y nm*, according to him, may have been either *Sākiyānaṃ* or *Sakkiyānaṃ*.

The early Brāhmī orthography was not a rigorous but only a haphazard one. The device of putting one consonant on the top of another to indicate a group may be said to be just coming in vogue, for we find a great deal of hesitancy and obvious mistake in the proper writing of some of these groups (e.g., *yv* for *vy* in *katayvo* for *kattavyvo*, as in *Girnar*). Even though groups of dissimilar consonants would be attempted to be indicated (e.g., *tp*, *vy*, *mh*, *pr*, *st*, as in *Girnar*), the same consonant doubled was never expressed in the orthography as such: there are no cases of *kk*, *gg*, *pp*, *tt*, etc.

The subsequent history of Indo-Aryan, as in the *Prākṛits* and the Modern Vernaculars, amply demonstrates that in the 3rd century B.C. and later, the double (or long) consonant pronunciation was the one actually current, and at this early period the modern or vernacular habit of dropping one member of a double consonant group with compensatory lengthening of the preceding vowel could not have been established. Thus, Old Indo-Aryan *bhakta* > Middle Indo-Aryan *bbatta* > New Indo-Aryan *bhāta*; Old Indo-Aryan, *anya* > Middle Indo-Aryan *añña*, *āñña* > New Indo-Aryan *āna*; *kārya* > *kājja* > *kāja* etc. The *bhāta*, *āna* and *kāja* stage, as apparently suggested by the inscriptional orthographies (rare enough as they are) *vāsa* and *rāño* (for *vāssa* and *rāñño*), could not possibly have characterised early Middle Indo-Aryan of the 3rd century B.C. The long *-ās* and *āñ* can only be taken as an orthographic device for *-ass-* and *-aññ-*. As regards the word *rājūka-rājuka-lājuka*, the spellings with *ā*—(*rājuka*, *lājuka*) show that we do not have the Skt. word *rājan* here. The word in the vernacular was evidently pronounced as *rājūka* or *lājūka* (<*rājju*+*ka* or *rajju*+*uka*); and *rājju* could evidently be written either as *rāju* or as *rāju*, as we have seen above; and *lāju*-, of course, is the graphic device for *lājju*-, which was the Eastern form of the word.*

* In this chapter the duration of the three main chronological periods, namely the period of the Imperial Mauryas, the period of the Imperial Guptas, and the period of the Palas of

Bengal and their contemporary powers are fixed after the chronological tables in Dr. R. C. Majumdar's work *The History and Culture of the Indian People* in Vols II, III, IV and V.

CHAPTER XIV

ANCIENT INDIAN SLAVERY DOWN TO THE END OF THE PERIOD OF THE LATE *SMRITIS* (c. 800 A.D.)—A HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL STUDY.

A. *Slavery in the Vedic period*

Megasthenes writing his account of India towards the beginning of the third century B.C. remarked that the Indians did not use aliens as slaves, much less a countryman of their own. Whether this memorable pronouncement was the result, as has been held, of the Greek's experience of the unusual mildness of the system in vogue among the Indians,¹ or else of the same idealizing tendency that runs through Tacitus's *Germania*,² it is difficult to decide. Nevertheless, it is but a historical truism that slavery has been a recognised institution in our land throughout the ancient, not to speak of the mediaeval, period of our history. To begin with the period of the Vedic literature, the term *dāsa* or *dasyu* in the *Rigveda* and later works means generally the non-Vedic aborigines in contrast with the vedic Aryans. But it is likewise used for a slave, a proof no doubt of the frequency with which individuals of the former class were converted into the latter category. That an Aryan freeman could also be reduced to slavery seems to follow from a passage in the famous dicing hymn of the *Rigveda* in which the parents and brothers of a gamester are made to say, "We know him not, take him away bound." The *Rigveda* refers in a few other passages to gifts of slaves to sages by their royal patrons.³ The later works of Vedic literature, the *Yajus-Samhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Upanishads*, similarly refer to slaves as objects of gift to priests and sages by kings and others. These gifts are said to amount from 50 or 100 in the older texts to 10,000 in the later passages. To the above we have to add that Janaka, King of Mithilā, is said in a famous *Upanishad* passage to have offered along with his people to become slaves of a sage out of gratitude for his religious instruction. Although the numbers in the above instances have merely an illustrative value, they would seem to indicate the extensive scale of slave establishments in royal households in the later times. We can account for this

¹ Vide Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 263, E. R. Bevan in Chap XVI of CHI Vol I and Louis Renou in *La civilisation de l'Inde Ancienne*, p. 207.

² Vide Jolly and Schmidt, *Arthaśāstra* edition, Vol I, Introduction, p. 38.

³ Refs;— (a) Rv, X 344 (slavery for gambling dues) (b) *ibid* VII 19 36

(gift of 50 'young women' probably meaning in this context as many female slaves) (c) *ibid* VIII 56.3 (gift of 100 slaves along with 100 donkeys and 100 fleece-bearing ewes. Cf. *ibid* VII 5.38 (gift of '10 noblemen' who were like gold in appearance apparently signifying as many captured nobles

only on the supposition that the number of the home-born slaves was being continuously swelled chiefly by capture in war. From the *Rigveda* and *Upanishad* passages quoted above which refer to the plight of a gamester and the somewhat quixotic offer of the king of Mithilā respectively, we may further infer that slavery in payment of debt as well as by self-choice was not unknown at this period. Another conclusion which seems to follow from the frequent references to gifts of slaves is that they were regarded thus early as chattels of their master. Of the status of the slaves in these early times we have otherwise no information. But we have a hint of their religious disabilities in the story of a sage (Kavasha Ailūsha) who was held as the supposed son of a slave to be unfit for participation in the *Soma* sacrifice.⁴ From the indications of social and economic conditions of the Indo-Aryans in the Vedic period, we can draw some inferences about the position held by the slaves in the public economy. The *Rigveda*, as is well known, knows small agricultural holdings which were cultivated after somewhat primitive methods by the Aryan freeman and his family. It likewise acquaints us with simple domestic industries befitting a primarily agricultural and pastoral community. It would seem that as yet slaves were employed on a limited scale in agriculture, trade and industry. The later Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* introduce us to more complex social and economic conditions, of which the outward symptoms were the emergence of a developed city-life, the improvement of agriculture, and above all, the multiplication and specialisation of industries. It has been held⁵ that this was accompanied by an economic revolution involving the substitution "for the peasant working on his own fields . . . the land-owner cultivating his estate by means of slaves, or the merchant carrying on his trade by the same instrumentality". But the evidence for such a supposed transformation is of the slenderest kind. It is also belied by the facts of history, for large-scale farming as well as industry and trade, as we shall presently see, was the exception rather than the rule down to comparatively late times.

B. Slavery in the period of the early Buddhist literature

It is in the period of the early Buddhist literature that we come across the first indications of a great development of the institution of slavery. The Pali canonical texts introduce us for the first time to formal classifications of slaves. These comprised, according to one account, three

⁴ Refs; (a) TS II 2.63 (gift of 'a male' human being evidently meaning a male slave alternatively with a horse) (b) AB XXXIX 8 (gift of 10,000 female slaves and of 10,000 elephants by a king to his family priest during coronation); (c) BU IV 4.23 (King Janaka's offer of himself and his people

in slavery to the sage Yājñavalkya); (d) CU VII 24.2 (slaves included among 'signs of greatness' in the world); (e) AB II 19 and KB. XII 1.3 (story of disqualifications of sage Kavasha Ailūsha).

⁵ By Prof. A. B. Keith (*CHI*, Vol I p. 128).

types, namely one born in the master's house (*antojāto*), one purchased for money (*dhanakkīto*) and one who "ought to die by the hand" of the enemy (but being captured was spared and employed as a slave) (*karamarānito*). According to another version they consisted of four types, namely, those who were slaves from their mothers, those who were purchased for money, those who became slaves by choice, and those who were driven to slavery by fear.⁶ The *Jātaka* stories contain concrete examples of these types as well as of a new type, namely, that of criminals condemned to servitude by royal decree.⁷ A late Buddhist work, Buddhaghosha's commentary (*Sumaṅgalavilāsini*) on the *Dīgha Nikāya*, mentions as instances of the class of slaves one born in the house, one purchased for money, one captured in war and one enslaved by self-choice.⁸ It would, therefore, appear that not only did wars continue to be a fruitful source of slaves as before, but that their number was being constantly recruited by self-choice (from personal insecurity and probably also from excessive economic distress or religious zeal) as well as the act of State in punishing criminals. We may further infer from the above the rise of a regular traffic in slaves. An interesting side-light is thrown upon the conditions of this trade by the frequent use of the expression 'meek as a 100-piece slave-girl' from which it would appear that a female slave was ordinarily available at that price. We have, however, instances of a sum of 700 *kārshāpanas* (copper coins?) being considered sufficient for purchase of a male or a female slave, and of a prince being sold for 1,000 *kārshāpanas*.⁹

From other references in the *Jātaka* tales, we can draw some further conclusions about the character of the institution of slavery at this period. Though the stories frequently refer to small farms and industries, mention is sometimes made of large estates of 1,000 *karīṣas*, as well as of rich capitalists owning 80 or 40 crores of money. Similarly by the side of the numerous references to small traders we are introduced to instances of trading on an extensive scale. What is more, not only kings and nobles, but also simple villagers and farmers are mentioned as keeping slaves in their families.¹⁰ The above facts would seem to indicate that slaves at this period filled a larger place in the domestic and public economy of the people than in the old Vedic times. The *Jātakas* again acquaint us with

⁶ Refs:—(a) *Vin.* Vol IV p. 224 (three types of slaves); (b) *Niddesa* I 11 and *Jāt* No 545 p. 285 (four types)

⁷ (a) *Jāt*, No. 259 p. 452; *ibid* No. 541 p. 117 (slave born in the master's house); *ibid* No. 402, p. 343 (slave purchased); (c) *ibid* No. 477 p. 220 and No. 531 p. 297 (persons captured and enslaved by robbers); (d) *ibid* No. 542 pp. 135, 138 (slavery through fear); (e) *ibid* No. 41 pp. 240-4 and No. 544 p. 220 (slavery by capture in war).

⁸ *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*, Part I p. 168 (four classes of slaves)

⁹ Refs:—(a) *Jāt* No. 64 p. 299 etc. (100 piece slave-girl); (b) *ibid* No. 402 p. 343 (700 *kārshāpanas* for a slave) (c) *ibid* No. 547 p. 577 (1000 *kārshāpanas* for a princely slave).

¹⁰ Refs:—(a) *Jāt* No. 64, p. 277, *ibid* No. 354, p. 162 (small farms); (b) *ibid* No. 389 p. 293, *ibid* No. 484 p. 276 (estate of 1000 *karīṣas*); (c) *ibid* No. 78, p. 349, No. 131 p. 466, No. 137, p. 478, No. 340 p. 128, No. 390, p. 300

the usual occupations of slaves. From these stories we learn that slaves were "ordinarily engaged in cooking, fetching water, pounding and drying rice, carrying food to and watching the field, giving alms, ministering to the master when he retired, or handling the plates and dishes, bringing the spittoon and fetching the fans during meals, sweeping the yards and stables and such other duties". It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that the slave-girl in one pretty story, when told by her good master to ask for a boon for herself from the king, desires a mortar, a pestle and a sieve which are just the instruments for threshing and winnowing rice. We have, however, one remarkable instance of a clever slave being employed as a store-keeper by his master.¹¹

Finally as regards the status of slaves, the *Jātakas* occasionally give us pleasing pictures of their treatment as members of the master's family. We hear even of a slave being permitted to learn reading, writing and handicrafts along with his master's sons, as well as of another slave whose advice was courteously sought and accepted by a virtuous prince who was his master. We have, however, in a canonical text a vivid picture of maltreatment of a king's slaves at their master's hands. From other references we learn that slaves could be thrashed by their masters. The evil custom of keeping slaves in fetters was not unknown. Run-away slaves, again, were forcibly taken back by their masters. The slaves, further, could be made the objects of gift. How much the treatment of the slave depended upon the temperament of the individual master is clearly shown by one example. In the above-mentioned story of a clever slave employed as a store-keeper he is made to reflect that he would not always enjoy that office, but would some day be found fault with, and then "beaten, imprisoned, branded and fed on a slave's fare". Well might a wise man declare in one story that the weal and woe of the slave depended upon his master, or as a wise man would say in another story, "the gentleman" (*ayiro*) is the lord and master of the slave. The low social status of the slave is sufficiently indicated by the use of the opprobrious epithet "the son of a slave", or "the servant of a slave's son" found in some of the texts. Other passages vividly portray the general depression of the slave's condition. On the other hand the slave

No. 421, p. 444, No. 439 p. 1, No. 440 p. 7, No. 444, p. 28, No. 480 p. 237, No. 482, p. 255 (capitalists owning 80 or 40 crores); (d) *ibid* No. 289 p. 428; No. 330 p. 101; No. 354 pp. 162-63; No. 541, p. 117 (slaves of simple villagers and others); "The *karisa* is a square measure of land being that space on which a *Karisa* of seed can be sown" (*P.T.S. Dict.*, s.v.).

¹¹ Refs; (a) *Jāt* No. 125, pp. 452-53 and No. 140, p. 484, (b) *ibid* No. 354, p. 163, No. 404, p. 356, (c) *ibid* No.

450, p. 67, (d) *ibid* No. 520 pp. 105, No. 531, p. 284 and No. 536, p. 413, (e) *ibid*, No. 542, p. 138, and No. 546 p. 336 (employments of slaves as specified above); (f) *ibid* No. 289, p. 428 (story of boon desired by slave-girl), (g) *ibid* No. 125 p. 451 (story of slave's employment as storekeeper). The duties of a slave at table are conveniently summarized with full refs. in the quotation given above from Ratilal Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India*, p. 211 and n.

could gain his freedom by the master's favour, or on payment of his ransom.¹²

The condition of the slaves in the early Buddhist period invites comparison with that of the free day-labourers (*kammakaras* or *bhatakas*) with whom they are often lumped together.¹³ The latter evidently had the advantage of personal freedom over the former. But their earnings are invariably stated to be so low as hardly to be sufficient for their maintenance. They lived in their own miserable quarters outside the city-gates. In so far as the despised castes (Chañḍālas, Pukkusas and so forth) on the other hand are concerned, the slaves differed from them in two important respects. Living in the households of their masters the latter lacked the cohesion and local isolation which marked out the former as a distinct caste, although of the lowest sort, in the Indian social system. Again, the latter, being habitually employed in ministering to the personal comforts of their masters, necessarily did not share in the impurity and untouchability of the former class.¹⁴

In estimating the influence of Buddhism upon the institution of slavery we may well remember at the outset that the Buddhist rules of monastic discipline (as in vol. I p. 76) going back to the very early history of the faith forbade the admission of slaves into the Order. This furnishes a fresh instance of that wise conservatism which is such a strong characteristic of the Buddhist rules of monastic discipline. Directly as well as indirectly, however, early Buddhism helped to mitigate the evils of the old institution. A canonical text (AN III p. 208) includes traffic in human beings in a list of five kinds of trade which should not be undertaken by a lay disciple. The five typical modes of discharging a householder's

¹² Status of slaves in early Buddhist period; (a) *Jāt* No. 354 p. 162 (family of six consisting of a Brāhmaṇa and his wife, his son and his daughter, his daughter-in-law and his female slave); (b) *ibid* No. 289, p. 428 (female slave asked by her master along with members of his family to beg a boon); (c) *ibid* No. 125 p. 451 (reading, writing etc learnt by a slave); (d) *ibid* 537 pp. 485-6 (slave's advice sought by a prince); (e) *MN* I p. 126. *Jāt*. No. 97 p. 402 (beating of female slaves by their mistresses); (f) *Puggala Paññatti* p. 56 (slaves carrying out the king's orders, on being impelled by whip, "impelled by fear, weeping with tears upon their faces"); (g) *Jāt* No. 547 p. 554 (simile of thrashing of slave); (h) *ibid* No. 542 p. 138 (prince's offer to serve bound in fetters along with other intended victims if he is saved from death); (i) *Vin.* I p. 76, *Jāt*. No. 127 p. 458 (forcible recovery of run-away slaves); (j) *Jāt*. No. 545 p. 285, p. 462, p. 464, p. 503, p. 577 (gifts of slaves);

(k) *Jāt* No. 125, p. 451 (reflections by slave store-keeper); (l) *ibid* 545, p. 285, p. 300 (wise men on relation of slave to his master); (m) *ibid* No. 391 p. 225, No. 445 p. 41 ('son of a slave' mentioned as a current term of abuse); (n) *DN* I p. 73 (servitude ranking with debt, imprisonment, illness and journey through a wilderness as a most painful 'condition'); (o) *ibid* p. 72 (joy of a slave not his own master, subject to another, unable to go whither he would after he had been emancipated from slavery, become his own master, not subject to others, a freeman, free to go whither he would); (p) *Jāt* No. 532 p. 313 (story of a rich Brāhmaṇa retiring to the Himalayas after disposing of his property and setting his slaves free); (q) *ibid* No. 547, p. 547, p. 577 (ransom fixed by a king at the time of giving away his children in slavery and of the latter regaining their freedom after payment of the same by their grandfather).

¹³⁻¹⁴ Vide p. 374.

duty towards his slaves and hirelings, so runs another important text (DN III 191), consists in employing them according to their capacities, giving them proper meals and wages, attending upon them in their illness, sharing delicacies and special dishes with them, and occasionally granting them leave. The feelings of the early Buddhist canonists towards slavery are sufficiently indicated by a fresh text (DN I 1.10) mentioning non-acceptance of a male or a female slave as the distinctive characteristic of the Buddha. The practical effect of these teachings is illustrated in the instance of the great Emperor Aśoka who, while inculcating his well-known law of piety upon his subjects, included the kind treatment of slaves and servants in this category.¹⁵

The references to the institution of slavery in the parallel literature of the Jaina canon and canonical commentaries, though of a later date than the Pali canon, agree generally with the data given above. The Jaina works refer to six types of slaves, namely those by birth, those purchased, those made slaves for non-payment of debt, those who have become slaves during famine, those who have failed to pay fines and therefore been punished with slavery, and those who have been taken prisoners.¹⁶ The slaves appear to have occupied a fairly large place in the domestic as well as public economy of the people. Not only kings and wealthy folk, but even common people kept slaves in their families. Again, although farming as well as industry was generally undertaken on a small scale, we are introduced to big land-owners who could own 500 plough-shares even after voluntary limitation of their possessions, while reference is made likewise to rich tradesmen owning one crore of jewels of various kinds.¹⁷ From this it is not unreasonable to infer that slaves were employed in agriculture and trade. As in the early Buddhist texts the slaves ranked among the possessions of their masters, but they could gain freedom by their master's favour.

C. Slavery in the period of the *Arthaśāstra* and *Dharmaśāstras*

The *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and the *Dharmaśāstras* (or metrical *Smṛitis*) of Manu, Yājñavalkya and their successors introduce us to the most advanced phase of development of the old Indian institution of slavery. In their sections on law and legal procedure they invariably incorporate clauses of the law relating to slavery sometimes, but not always, under a separate title. Before considering these legal clauses it seems desirable to make some general remarks. Manu (VIII 415) and Nārada (V. 20-28), to begin with, classify slaves under seven and fifteen heads respectively. The former category consists of one made captive 'under a standard' i.e. in warfare (*dhvajāhṛita*), one accepting slavery for subsistence (*bhaktadāsa*), one born in the master's household (of a female slave) (*grihaja*), one purchased (*krīta*), one received by gift (*datrima*), one inherited from ancestors (*pitrika*), and one enslaved by way of punishment (*daṇḍadāsa*). The latter group consists of one born

^{15, 17} Vide p. 374.

in the master's house (of a female slave), one purchased, one acquired by gift, one inherited, one saved from death in time of famine, one pledged by his master, one released from a heavy debt, one taken captive in war, one gained at a stake, one offering himself as a slave, one who serves for a specified term, one who is a slave for subsistence, one who accepts slavery out of passion for a female slave, one who sells himself, and an apostate from asceticism. Independent references to the various categories of slaves and their status are found in the *Arthaśāstra* and *Dharmaśāstra* works. Kauṭilya (III 13 and V 5) refers in different contexts to several types of slaves such as one made slave for subsistence, one acquired by purchase, one given as pledge, one self-sold, one born (of a female slave) in the master's household, one inherited, one made a slave by way of punishment, one captured in war, and one received as gift. From other passages in his work (e.g. in I 21, II 15, *ibid* 23 and *ibid* 24) it appears that slaves were employed in the king's household as well as on his private farms and store-houses. But that even villagers kept slaves is shown by the author's direction (II 35) to the officer in charge of five or ten villages (*gopas*) to enter the numbers of slaves and free labourers among others in the household register prepared by him. How much the master's proprietary right was sought to be guarded by the State is shown by the author's further statement (II 1) that the king should compel slaves and pledgees in newly settled areas to fulfil their obligations to their masters. Evidence to the same effect is furnished by the author's prescription (IV 10) of a heavy fine (or mutilation in lieu thereof) for theft of a male or a female slave. Turning to the *Dharmaśāstras*, we find that the capture of slaves in warfare is held to a limited extent in the *Manu-Smṛiti* (VII 96) as well as in the *Mahābhārata* (III 272; 11; IV 33.50) to be in accordance with the recognised laws of warfare. The sale as well as the purchase of slaves is referred to in various clauses of the *Dharmaśāstra* law, as when Nārada (XII 54) mentions a class of wanton women (*svairiṇī*) who are acquired by purchase, and Kātyāyana (in KSS. 693-94) allows the benefit of half a month and twice as much at the sale of a male and a female slave respectively to a purchaser without examination. On the other hand the sale of one's self or wife or child into slavery is branded by Manu (XI 62), Yājñavalkya (III 236) and Viṣṇu (XXXVII 6) as well as in a *Mahābhārata* text (XIII 45, 23) as a sin of the second degree (*upapātaka*) to be expiated with appropriate penances. Huge gifts of male and female slaves to Brāhmaṇas are mentioned in the stories of the *Mahābhārata* (II 52, 45, III 233, 43 and *ibid* 185.34; IV 18, 21 VII 57.5-9). The acquisition of slaves by inheritance is referred to in a text of Kātyāyana in KSS (882-83) which includes them in the class of property that should be enjoyed by co-sharers in common. Not to speak of freemen being reduced to slavery for connexion with a female slave, a free woman marrying a male slave is condemned to slavery by the *Smṛiti* law. Enslavement by way of punishment is illustrated by the undermentioned clause of law in Yājñavalkya.

Nārada and Kātyāyana condemning an apostate from asceticism to be the king's slave for life.¹⁸

References in the general literature belonging to the centuries immediately following the Christian era partly confirm and partly supplement the data given above. That the sale of wife and child as an evil custom or else by a man in distress, in spite of its strong denunciation in the *Dharmaśāstras*, was not unknown at this period is proved by passages in the *Mahābhārata*¹⁹ and the Pali *Milindapañha*.²⁰ From the last-named work²¹ we further learn that an adulterous wife caught *flagrante delicto* by her husband could be punished with slavery. In the story of the gambler Saṁvāhaka offering himself for sale in public in the *Mṛichchhakatika* drama²² as well as in the famous Epic story of the servitude of the five Pāṇḍava brothers along with Draupadī for defeat of Yudhishthira at dice-play²³, we have a concrete illustration of servitude for a wager. The contrast between the fortunes of the slave-girl Madanikā and the male slave Sthāvaraka in the *Mṛichchhakatika* drama vividly shows how the treatment of slaves depended upon the temperament of their individual owners.²⁴

We may draw from the above some general conclusions about the condition of slavery in the early centuries before and after Christ. Firstly, we learn that slavery was a fairly general institution in use among high and low alike. Secondly, it appears that the ranks of hereditary slaves were swelled by capture in war, sale of wife and child by distressed persons, losses at dice-play, and lastly, punishment for indebtedness, connection with a male or a female slave, adultery or apostasy. Thirdly, we find that the master enjoyed full rights of ownership over the slave including those of gift, sale, mortgage and bequest.

¹⁸ For refs to separate titles of law for slaves on the one hand and free labourers on the other, vide, (a) *K.A.* Chaps. 13-14 (with the title in English rendering as *Regarding slaves and free labourers*); (b) *Yāj* Chap. II 182-84 and *Nār.* V, (both chapters bearing the title Non-performance of Agreement in its English version).

¹⁹ Vide *Mbh.* VIII 45, 40 for custom of sale of wife and child among *Aṅgas*.

²⁰ Vide *Miln.* p. 279 for ref to acknowledged custom of pledging or selling son by father in debt or without livelihood.

²¹ Vide *Miln.* p. 158 for husband's right of punishment of wife for adultery.

²² Vide *Mṛichchhakatika* drama attributed to king Śūdraka Act II for story of gambler Saṁvāhaka, who offers himself for sale in the open street for a sum of 10 *suvarṇas* (meaning gold coins)

owed by him to the gambling master.

²³ Vide *Mbh* (critical edition II 65f) for story of slavery of five Pāṇḍava brothers and their common wife Draupadī because of defeat of their eldest brother by King Duryodhana.

²⁴ Thus we read in the aforesaid drama how the female slave Madanikā is treated by her high-minded mistress Vasantasenā (the heroine of the play) from the first as a friend and a confidante, while the male slave Sthāvaraka is beaten and put in fetters by his brutal master Saṁsthānka. We are further told how while Madanikā is graciously released by her mistress to make possible her union with her lover, Sthāvaraka has to wait for his emancipation till the disgrace of his master who was no other than the brother-in-law of the reigning king and the issue of an order to that effect by the new king.

D. *Comparison between Arthaśāstra and
Dharmaśāstra law of slavery*

It now remains for us to draw a general comparison between the *Arthaśāstra* and the *Dharmaśāstra* laws relating to slavery, the former representing what may be called the current law-code and the latter the code of the Brāhmaṇa canonists. This comparison seems to suggest a fundamental difference between the attitude of the two sets of authorities. At the basis of Kauṭilya's body of laws, lies the conception of the inherent right of an Aryan man to personal freedom. Introducing his title of law relating to slaves and free labourers, Kauṭilya (III 13) imposes penalties (increasing in intensity, it is true, with the social status of the party injured) for sale or pledge of a minor of the Śūdra, Vaiśya, Kshatriya and Brāhmaṇa castes living by Aryan ways. This is justified by the memorable maxim (K.A., loc cit) that while barbarians incur no blame for sale or pledge of their children, an Aryan can never be reduced to the status of a slave²⁵. An *Ārya*, we are told in the same context, can be pledged under some emergent circumstances, but steps must be taken for his release, no matter whether he is a minor pledged by others or has pledged himself, as soon as money can be found for his ransom. Not only does the son of a self-sold slave remain an *Ārya*, but such a slave along with one enslaved for subsistence and one pledged can regain their *Ārya*-status on payment of ransom. The clauses of the *Arthaśāstra* law in other respects reflect the author's view of the sanctity of the *Ārya*'s person. From the law of war entitling a man to own with the king's permission whatever he has gained from the enemy's country, Kauṭilya (III 10) significantly expects the man living by Aryan ways as well as the property of gods, Brāhmaṇas and ascetics. A Chanḍāla man, we further find (ibid III 20), touching an *Ārya* woman is punished with a fairly heavy fine. Again, while a man violating a slave-woman in the lock-up is visited with the first amercement, one violating an *Ārya* woman is punished with the highest amercement, and the Superintendent-in-charge guilty of the same offence is punished with death (ibid IV 9). By contrast the *Dharmaśāstras* tend almost without exception to emphasise the right of "the twice-born classes" (and especially of the Brāhmaṇas) to personal freedom to the exclusion, and sometimes even at the expense of the Śūdra. Thus Manu (VIII 412-13) while imposing a very heavy fine upon a Brāhmaṇa forcibly and out of greed making persons of the twice-born classes perform servile work after their investiture with the sacred thread, expressly allows the Brāhmaṇa to exact such work from a Śūdra, whether purchased or not, and he justifies this by repeating the characteristic doctrine of the Śūdra's

²⁵ We quote below this memorable passage (K. A. III 13) in the original:—
mlechchhānāmadoshah prajāṃ vikretu-

*mādhātum vā na tvevāryasya dāsa-
bhāvaḥ.*

divinely ordained occupation as the Brāhmaṇa's slave. In the same spirit Yājñavalkya (II 183), Nārada (V 29) and Kātyāyana (in KSS 716) lay down the remarkable maxim (borrowed evidently from the *Smṛiti* rules about caste inter-marriages) that slavery should be in the descending (*anuloma*, lit. "with the hair"), and not in the ascending (*pratiloma*, lit. 'against the hair') order. This rule would prevent a Vaiśya from being the slave of a Śūdra, a Kshatriya from being the slave of a Vaiśya or a Śūdra, and a Brāhmaṇa from being the slave of either of these as well as of the Kshatriya. To this rule Nārada makes a characteristic exception in the case of one who has renounced the duties of his order. Repeating the clause of Manu stated above, Viṣṇu quoted in *Parāśara-Mādhava* imposes the penalty of the highest amercement upon a person who employs an individual of high caste on servile work. Kātyāyana, after categorically declaring that slavery pertains to the three lower classes but not to the Brāhmaṇas, observes that the Brāhmaṇa should not be made to work as a slave even by an individual of his own caste (or according to another reading, by an individual of another caste). When a Brāhmaṇa is made a slave, Kātyāyana argues, the king's lustre is destroyed, and he quotes the dictum of Bṛihaspati to the effect that while the rules of the Kshatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra castes permit their enslavement by persons of their own order, a Brāhmaṇa should not be employed on servile work. Should a Brāhmaṇa choose to do such work of his own free will, Kātyāyana adds, it must not be of an impure character.²⁶ Summing up the above, we may state in modern phraseology that while the *Arthaśāstra* law insists in the main upon the principle of status by nationality, the law of the *Dharmaśāstras* lays stress upon the principle of status by birth.

It appears from the above that the general tendency of the *Dharmaśāstras* (or the metrical *Smṛitis*) in contrast with that of the *Arthaśāstra* was to eliminate or at least restrict the class of high-born slaves, while perpetuating the servitude of the lower classes (especially the Śūdras). It was probably for this reason that the status of the slave in the *Smṛiti* law, as compared with the law of *Arthaśāstra*, shows on the whole a change for the worse. Let us illustrate this in the first instance from the author's references to the slave's personal rights. In his chapter quoted above (III 13) on the laws relating to slaves and free labourers, Kātyāyana imposes a heavy penalty upon the man who makes pledged slaves perform certain kinds of impure work. By contrast Nārada (V 6) distinguishes slaves from free labourers expressly on the ground that the former unlike the latter are employed upon impure work. Kātyāyana (in KSS

²⁶ We quote below different readings of Kātyāyana's text;— (a) *samavarno'pi viprantu dāsatvaṃ naiva kārayet* (quotation by Aparārka, on Yājñavalkya), (b) *samavarṇe'pi viprasya* (rest as above) (quotation in *Smṛitichandrikā* Part III pp. 461-62); (c) *asavarṇe tu*

viprasya (rest as above) (quotation in *Parāśara-Mādhava* III p. 342). It may be added that this first reading is adopted by Dr. P. V. Kane in KSS verse 717 and in *H. of D.* Vol II p. 186 and n.

720) similarly reserves work of the above kind for the issue of female slaves. In the next place Kautilya in the above as well as in other contexts (II 36, III 13 and IV 12) mentions penalties for maltreatment of various classes of slaves. Chastisement or improper treatment of a female slave, we are told, is to be visited with forfeiture of the deposit money or even with release of the injured party from servitude: forcible connexion with a pledged nurse is to be punished with fine: the penalty for committing the same offence with a pledged maiden is forfeiture of the deposit money as well as payment of her marriage-portion (*śulka*) and of double this amount as fine to the king: violation of a slave woman by a town watchman at night-time is punishable with a fine: connexion with the free maiden daughter of a male or a female slave as well as with female slave after payment of her ransom is to be punished with fine and with payment of ornaments as well as of the marriage dowry or of clothes as the case might be: a man selling or pledging abroad certain types of minor slaves without relations for the purpose of making them perform mean work, as well as one selling or pledging a pregnant female slave without providing for her treatment is punishable with the first amercement, the purchaser as well as the abettor in this last instance being liable to the same penalty: a fine is similarly imposed upon one who fails to allow the slave to gain the *Ārya* status even after receipt of a suitable ransom. Such wise and humane regulations are rare in the *Dharmaśāstras*. Manu in fact allows the head of the household the same limited power of correction over the slave as over the wife and the son. The household head, we read (ibid VIII 299-300), may beat all these with rope or split bamboo on the back part of the body, but never on the noble part, violation of this rule (by him) being punishable (with the same penalties) as for theft. The *Śūdra* in particular, whether free or not, could according to Manu be made to perform servile work for a *Brāhmaṇa*. Only in Yājñavalkya (II 293) we have a clause of law declaring forcible intercourse with a slave woman under one's protection or a freed female slave to be punishable with fine, and in Kātyāyana (KSS 729) another clause imposing a heavy fine upon one who though not in distress plans to sell his female slave for subsistence (*bhaktadāsī*) in spite of her wailings.

The clauses of the law relating to the slave's property rights in the *Ārthaśāstra* and the *Dharmaśāstras* betray similar differences. In his chapter (III 13) on slaves and free labourers Kautilya allows the self-sold slave along with the slave for subsistence and the pledged slave to retain what he earns without prejudice to his master's work and even to inherit his paternal property. On the other hand Manu (VIII 416) followed *verbatim* by Nārada (V 41), Devala and Kātyāyana (quoted in *Vivādaratnākara* p. 150) as well as *Mbh* (V, 33, 68) lay down the remarkable dictum that the slave has no property of his own, and that whatever he earns belongs to his master. In actual practice, however, the *Dharmasāstras*, no doubt in deference

to existing practice allow qualified property-rights to the slave, especially the son of a Śūdra by a female slave. Such a son according to Manu (IX 179) and Yājñavalkya (II 133) may be given a portion of his father's property at his discretion: when the father dies, he has according to Yājñavalkya a half-share if there are legitimate sons, and a full share if there are no such sons or daughter's sons. What is more, Kātyāyana (in KSS 724) observes that what the slave acquires through the favour of his master and what he acquired by selling himself do not belong to that master.²⁷

The law relating to what may be called the public rights of slaves indicates less discrepancy in the two parallel systems. The slave is included by Kauṭilya (III 1) in a list of persons who are disqualified for instituting judicial proceedings, with the proviso that the clause does not apply when those persons are authorised by the appropriate officials. In the same context Kauṭilya includes slaves in a list of dependent persons whose agreements are not valid unless authorised. Repeating the dictum of Kauṭilya just mentioned, Nārada (V 30) includes the slave in a list of persons who are in law dependent on others. Nārada (V 12) and Kātyāyana (quoted by Aparārka in his commentary on Yāj p. 648 as well as by Chanḍeśvara in his *Śmṛiti* digest called *Vivādaratnākara* p. 56), again, in the spirit of Kauṭilya declare that a debt incurred by a slave for the benefit of the family in the absence of the owner of the house is binding upon all, while Manu (VIII 70) and Uśanas (quoted in *Vyavaharamāyūkha* p. 150) allow a slave to be a witness when no other witnesses are available.

The *Arthaśāstra* and *Dharmaśāstra* clauses of law relating to the emancipation of slaves, while resembling each other in some respects, indicate important differences on other points. Kauṭilya in his chapter (III 13) mentioned above permits the self-sold slave as well as the slave for subsistence to purchase his freedom, provision being made in the former case that the ransom should correspond to the deposit-money. He who has been made a slave for non-payment of a fine, we are further told in the same chapter, may redeem himself by performance of a work, while an *Ārya* who has been taken captive in war is released by performance of equivalent work, or else by paying half his ransom. With the above may be compared the similar clauses in the *Dharmaśāstras*. The slave, says Yājñavalkya (II 183), is released on giving up his means of subsistence (for which he has become a slave) as well as on payment of ransom. One who has been maintained in a time of famine, says Nārada (V 31 and *ibid* 36), becomes free by giving a pair of cows: one who is pledged is freed if his master releases him by repaying the deposit

²⁷ The trans. of Kātyāyana's text given above follows the reading *prasāda-vikrayāt yat tu na svāmīdhanam arhati* adopted by Kane (KSS p. 267n and *H. of D.* Vol II p. 186) after the

quotation in Vāchaspatimiśra's *Vivādashintāmaṇi* p. 46 in place of the reading *prakāśam vikrayādyattu* (rest as above) in Chanḍeśvara's *Vivādaratnākara*, p. 150.

money: one who is a slave for debt is released by repaying the debt with interest: one stipulated as slave for a certain period by the expiry of his term: one who approached another man with the words 'I belong to you' as well as one captured in war and one gained in a stake by giving a substitute equal to him in work; one who is a slave for subsistence by giving up the same; one who has been attracted by a female slave by giving her up. To the above Yājñavalkya (II 182) and Nārada (V 30 and *ibid* 38) add two very important clauses to the effect that one who has been made a slave by force or sold by robbers and one who has saved his master's life become immediately free, Nārada observing that in the latter case the slave is to receive the son's share of his master's inheritance. On the other hand, Nārada (V 29, *ibid* 32 and *ibid* 37) declares categorically that the first four types in his list of fifteen classes of slaves, namely, one born in the master's household (of a female slave), one acquired by purchase, one received by gift, and one acquired by inheritance cannot be freed except by the master's favour, for the slavery comes to them by hereditary descent. In the same context Nārada (V 35) in direct contradiction of the rule of Kauṭilya (III 13) quoted above ordains that one voluntarily selling himself into slavery is never released from servitude—a dictum which should be understood in the light of the older *Smṛiti* rule including the sale of one's self among the sins of the second degree (*upapātaka*). Yājñavalkya (II 183), Nārada (V 35) and Kātyāyana 90 (quoted in *KSS* 731), moreover introduce, characteristically enough, a new clause of law to the effect that an apostate from asceticism becomes the king's slave and for ever incapable of release. Finally, while according to Kauṭilya a female slave bearing a child to her master is forthwith released from servitude along with her offspring, the *Dharmaśāstras* with the single exception of Kātyāyana make no such provision. As regards the status of the emancipated slave Manu (VIII 414) developing the principle of status by birth to its extreme limit, declares that a Śūdra although emancipated by his master is not released from servitude because of the Śūdra's inherent nature. Nārada (quoted in *Parāśara-Mādhava* p. 347), however, appears to state that when a slave is emancipated, his food may be eaten, his presents may be accepted, and he may be respected by worthy persons.

We may mention in conclusion a few *Dharmaśāstra* texts inculcating in specific detail humane treatment of slaves. According to a text (II 4.9.11) of *Āpastamba-Dharmasūtra* one may stint himself or his wife or his son as to food, but not a slave or a free labourer. Similarly Manu in one place (IV 185) asks the householder to bear without resentment the fault committed by his slave who is "his shadow". Isolated as are these statements, we may take them to reflect one phase of the complex *Smṛiti* attitude towards slavery in contrast with the simple standpoint of early Buddhism.

CHAPTER XV

THE RITE OF HEAD-OFFERING TO THE DEITY IN ANCIENT INDIAN LITERATURE AND ART

Suicide as a means of escape from present bodily or mental ills or for the acquisition of religious merit in the next world has been an established institution in our country from early times. Buddhism in accordance with its doctrine of the Middle Path condemned it along with other forms of asceticism. On the other hand, Jainism from the first with its strongly ascetic bent recommended death by starvation (known technically as *sallekhana*) as the approved method of terminating one's existence. The *Smṛitis* and the *Purāṇas* from early time exhibit a two-fold attitude towards suicide. On the one hand we are told that suicide is permissible for old or diseased persons in various forms such as drowning or plunging into fire or falling from a precipice, and that it is commendable when it is performed at a holy place (such as by throwing oneself into the river from the fig-tree at Prayāga, or by drowning near the pilgrim centre of Vṛiddhatīrtha in Kashmir). On the other hand, we read, the relations of a man committing suicide need not perform the ceremony of purification. Among the later authorities the *Ādityapurnā* (ante 13th c. A.D.) forbids Brāhmaṇas and others to enter into water for drowning, while the *Smṛitichandrikā* (I 30-32) which is a *Smṛiti* Digest written by Devanabhaṭṭa between 1200 and 1225 A.D. quotes a text including "starting on the Great Journey" (to the Himalayas) and the suicide of very old people by falling into the fire or from a precipice, in the list of forbidden practices in the Kali age. The *Smṛitis* down to Yājñavalkya and Nārada are silent about the institution of the burning of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands, while among the later authorities beginning with Bṛihaspati it is approved (wholly or partly) by some and condemned by others. Authentic instances of suicide in various forms (including that of widow-burning) occur in the realistic accounts of foreign observers downwards from the time of Alexander's companions in the last quarter of the fourth century B.C., and in our historical records onwards from the rise of the Imperial Guptas in the fourth century A.D.¹

¹ Refs:—(a) Manu VI 3; Yāj. III 55; *Ādipurāṇa* and other texts quoted by Aparārka on Yāj. III 6 (approval of suicide); (b) Gautama, Apastamba, Manu quoted by Aparārka *loc. cit.* (condemnation of suicide); (c) Bṛihaspati verses 483-84 (widow's alternative obligation of burning); (d) Parāśara III 32-33, Śaṅkha, Aṅgiras and Hārīta quoted by Vijñāneśvara on Yāj. I 86, Aparārka *loc. cit.*, *Smṛityarthasāra*

93 (injunction for widow's self-immolation); (e) Paiṭhinasi, Aṅgiras, Uśanas and Vyāghrapāda quoted by Aparārka on Yāj. I 88 (self-immolation of Brāhmaṇa widows a solutely or conditionally forbidden); (f) *Smṛitichandrikā* III 594-97 (emphatic condemnation of widow's self-immolation). A connected history of the rite of the widow's self-immolation from the 4th to the 14th century A.D.

In the present chapter it is proposed to collect the references to a particularly gruesome type of suicide which was known and practised in our country from the early centuries of the Christian era apparently without any direct canonical sanction.

Probably the oldest literary reference to a devotee's cutting off his own head as an offering to his patron-deity is found in a story of the last book of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (ibid VII 9-10). Here we are told how the demon-king Rāvaṇa practised the severest austerities for a period of 'ten thousand years' out of jealousy of the greatness of his half-brother Vaiśravaṇa (Kubera), and how his example was followed by his two brothers. While, however, the pious Kumbhakarna chose to expose his body to the rigours of the weather and the virtuous Vibhishana standing in a fixed position devoted himself to Vedic studies throughout that period, Rāvaṇa himself fasting continuously offered at the end of each term of one thousand years one of his own heads to the sacred fire. At the end of the last term when he was preparing similarly to offer his remaining head, God Brahmā appeared before him and granted him at his desire the boon of invincibility against enemies. In the above, it will be noticed, the orthodox author of the Epic conceives Rāvaṇa's act as a weird practice befitting the most eminent but the least virtuous of the evil race of demons.

It is in the ritual works of the *Śākta* sect that we have clear directions for the devotee's offer of his own flesh and blood to the Great Goddess. In the *Devī-māhātmya* section of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* we are told how Suratha (a king) and Samādhi (a Vaiśya) after listening to the whole story of the Goddess's miraculous deeds in the past erected her image and propitiated her with various offerings including those soaked with blood from their own bodies. The Goddess being thus propitiated appeared before them and granted them all their desires. How the Goddess becomes satisfied for a thousand years by the offer of blood of the lion and the *śarabha* (a mythical animal) as well as from one's own body and how she fulfils all desires in six months' time when one offers her a small piece of flesh close to his heart, is told in the *Kālikā Purāṇa*. The *Kumārītāntara* quoted in the *Tantrasāra* (perhaps the most popular Tāntric digest in Bengal) promises the boon of royalty to one who offers blood from his own body and the fulfilment of all desires to one who offers a small piece of flesh near his heart. The *Matsyasūkta* of *Mahātāntara* quoted in the late Tāntric digest from Bengal called the

in the light of the *Smṛiti* texts as well as the evidence of Indian historical records and foreign notices is given by the present writer in the chapters on social life in Vols. III-V of *The History and Culture of the Indian People*; for earlier references vide the account of the classical writers about the customs of 'the Kathaioi' (Kaṭhas) of the

Punjab at the time of Alexander's invasion (327-24 B.C.) and of the suicide of the widow of the leader of the Indian contingent in Eumenes's army (316 B.C.). The same writers tell us about the suicide of the Indian sophist "Kalanos" at Babylon in 325 B.C.

Prānatoshanī compares the merits of different kinds of blood-offerings including that of his own blood, by the devotee to the Goddess.² It is a matter of common knowledge that the rite of offering blood nearest the heart before the Goddess is much observed by pious Hindu ladies of our country down to our own times.

It is interesting to observe in this connexion that the ritual works of the Śākta sect seek to impose a ban upon observance of the above rite by Brāhmaṇas. In the chapter of the *Kālikā Purāṇa* quoted above a Brāhmaṇa is forbidden to offer blood from his own body to the Goddess, such an act being branded as a sin equally heinous with suicide. The same warning is conveyed in the *Tantrasāra* work to which we have referred above. Similar inhibitory texts from the *Gāyatrī-tantra* are quoted in the *Haratattva-dīdhiti* which further explains away a text of *Yoginī-tantra* expressly enjoining a Brāhmaṇa to offer his own blood to the Goddess³.

It follows from the above that the religious ritual of the Śākta sect alone approves of the worshipper's offer of his own flesh and blood to the Goddess, an exception being made in this case in favour of Brāhmaṇas. Of similar rite in case of other sects we have no trace. Nevertheless we have reasons to believe that an extreme form of the ritual in which the worshipper offered his own head to the deity was known and practised in our country since at least the period of the Imperial Guptas. As regards historical instances of this kind, we have one inscription of 991 A. D. from the Kannaḍa area stating how a loyal subject gave up his head to a goddess on the birth of the king's son in fulfilment of his vow.⁴ Coming to later times we have first to refer to an inscribed *stela* from Nellore District of South India belonging to the 20th year of king Kampavarman⁵. In the last place we may quote the testimony of Nicolo Conti a Venetian of noble family who starting from the city of Damascus c. A.D. 1419 visited Malabar and Coromandel Coasts and various parts of the interior of India as far north as Mathura and the islands of Ceylon, Sumatra and Java, and afterwards by way of Aracan as far north as Ava on the upper Irawadi and then returned home in A.D. 1444 by way

² For the story of worship of the Goddess by Suratha and Samādhi vide *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* XCIII 7-11. For refs. to blood-offering from the devotee's own body to the deity, vide (a) *Kālikā-Purāṇa* LXVII 172, 184-85; (b) quotation in *Tantrasāra*, Bangabasi ed. (Calcutta), pp. 933-34; (c) quotation in *Prānatoshanī*, Basumatī ed. (Calcutta), p. 285.

³ Texts banning Brāhmaṇa's offer of his flesh and blood;—

(a) *simhaṃ vyāghraṃ narañchāpi svagātrarudhiraṃ tathā na dadyād brāhmaṇo madyaṃ mahadevyai kadāchana* (*Kālikā Purāṇa* LXVII, 50)

(b) *madyaṃ dattvā mahādevyai brāhmaṇo narakam vrajet svagātrarudhiraṃ dattvā ātmahatyaṃavāpnuyāt*

(*Tantrasāra*, p. 934);

(c) *Yattu evaṃ vipro devatāyai svagātrarudhiraṃ dadedīti Yoginītantrashashṭhapaṭalavachanam tattādrisādhikāripārāṃ pūrvavachane svagātrarudhiraḍānasya madyatulyanindāśravaṇāt* (*Haratattva-dīdhiti*, p. 329).

⁴ *Epigraphia Carnatica*, vol. VIII p. 217.

⁵ For ref. vide Vol. XII No. 106 of the work *South Indian Inscriptions*.

of Calicut and Cambay and thence by way of the Ethiopian coast and the Red Sea and across the desert to Cairo in Egypt. During his stay in India he heard of the practice of religious suicide at 2 distinct places. In the city of Cambaila (unidentified) the devotees who were venerated as saints presenting themselves before the idols of these gods in a determined spirit of self-immolation voluntarily cut off their own necks in a particularly picturesque fashion. Again at the great city of 'Bizenegalia (Vijayanagar or rather Hampi) at the confluence of the Krishna and Tungabhadra Rivers at a certain time of the year when their idol was carried through the city, many being led by the fervour of their faith deliberately flung themselves before the chariot wheels of their god in the belief that this mode of character would be very acceptable to that god.⁶ The fullest and the most conclusive evidence is furnished by the references in literature and art. In several works of the Sanskrit literature of folklore we have the story of the washerman Dhavala and his brother-in-law (or friend) who cut off their own heads for presentation to the Goddess Gauri in a fit of excessive devotion. When the grief-stricken wife of Dhavala prepared to follow suit, the Goddess restored the dead persons to life. In one version Dhavala figures as a Prince who won his bride by offering to cut off his head for propitiation of the Goddess.⁷ We may next refer to a number of stories belonging to the cycle of Vikramāditya (the King Arthur of Ancient Indian literary tradition). In these stories the king interceding in favour of some suffering mortal prepares to strike at his own neck with his sword, and thus propitiates the deity (a goddess or a god or a divine attendant) for granting him the necessary favour. Another cycle of stories in this class of works is important as reflecting the impact of the canonical ban against a Brāhmaṇa's offer of his flesh and blood to the deity. This is the story of Viravara who is said to have actually or nearly cut off his own head as an offering to the Goddess *Chandikā* for the purpose of saving his royal master from his impending doom. While Viravara is said in two slightly different versions of the *Kathāsaritsāgara* to have been a Brāhmaṇa, he is described in the versions of the *Vetālapañchaviṃśati* as well as in the *Hitopadeśa* and the *Bṛīhatkathāmañjarī* as a *rājaputra* and a Kshatriya.⁸

⁶ For a connected account of the Eastern travels of Nicolo Conti vide R.H. Major *India in the fifteenth century* (1857), Introduction, pp. lix ff. Nicolo Conti's account of the custom of religious suicide in vogue among the Indians is quoted in an English translation from R.H. Major's work above-mentioned (pp. 27-28).

⁷ Stories of Dhavala as a washerman:— (a) Kshemendra's *Bṛīhatkathāmañjarī*, IX 405-15 (b) Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara*, LXXX 4-51; (c) Śivadāsa's

version of *Vetālapañchaviṃśati*. His story as a prince:— Jambhaladatta's version of *Vetālapañchaviṃśati*. (For the last two stories, vide the work, *Jambhaladatta's version of the Vetālapañchaviṃśati* by M. B. Emeneau (Vol. IV pp. 61-63 and notes).

⁸ The stories of Vikramāditya's propitiation of the Goddess Ambikā or Bhuvaneśvarī, of an unnamed deity fond of human flesh and of an attendant of God Śiva, may be read in translation in the work *Vikrama's Adventures*,

The classical Tamil literature belonging to the early centuries of the Christian era likewise refers to the rite of head-offering by the devotee under a technical name (*talai-bali*). In the well-known Epic poem called the *Śilappadikāram* ("The Lay of the Anklet") we are told of warriors who "cut off their dark-haired heads containing such fierce red eyes as seemed to burn those upon whom they looked and willingly offered them upon the sacrificial altar (of the guardian deity) with the prayer that the conquering king might be ever victorious."⁹

The popularity of the head-offering *motif* is shown by the fact that it finds mention not only in the works of ancient Sanskrit and Tamil literature, but also in the modern vernacular literature of folk-tales. We have thus the pathetic story of Hamir, the valiant Chauhan chieftain of Ranthambhor, who had the audacity to defy the mighty Alauddin Khalji, Sultan of Delhi, and at last ended his life by cutting off his own head as an offering to the God Rudra. This story is told in four Hindi poems of the first half of the nineteenth century and is illustrated by at least three series of paintings of the Kangra school belonging to that period.¹⁰

Let us turn to the references to the above rite in Ancient Indian plastic art. A terracotta panel now deposited in the Mathura Museum "shows a bearded monk with emaciated ribs detaching his own head with a sword which has half entered his throat". The monk is shown in a kneeling posture with his right hand grasping the sword and the left hand holding his tuft of hair. This specimen which was recovered from the bed of the Jumna at Mathura in 1938 has been assigned on grounds of style to the Gupta period. Again, among the terracottas decorating the base of the main shrine of the recently discovered great Buddhist monument at Paharpur (in the Dinajpur District of East Pakistan) there is one "which shows a man seated on a cushion, holding the top-knot of his head with the left hand and a sword in the right across his own neck as if in the act of striking".¹¹ The largest number of specimens of this kind has been discovered in South India. An old South-Indian sculpture now preserved in the Madras Government Museum "shows a man holding his head by its hair with his left hand, while he severs it from his body

the thirty-two tales of the throne, by Franklin Edgerton, Part I, tr. pp. 50, 52, 94, 215, 220. For the story of Viravara as a Brāhmaṇa, vide Somadeva's *Kaṭhāsarit-sāgara*, LIII 86-193, LXXV 5-120, and as a *rājaputra* and Kshatriya vide (a) Kshemendra's *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* (b) *Hitopadeśa* III 8, (c) and (d) Śivadāsa's as well as Jambhaladatta's versions of *Veṭāla-pañchavimśati* (quoted by Emeneau, *op. cit.* p. 43).

⁹ The above is quoted from the Eng. tr. of *Śilappadikāram* by V. R. Rama-

chandra Dikshitar, p. 113.

¹⁰ For the story of Hamir vide Hirananda Sastri, *The Hamir Haṭh*, *Journal of Indian Art and Industry*, October 1915, pp. 35-40. (I owe this ref. to Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Emeritus Professor of the Calcutta University.)

¹¹ Refs;—(a) V. S. Agrawala, *Handbook of Archaeology*, Mathura 1939, p. 51 and fig. 39 (terracotta panel in Mathura Museum); (b) K. N. Dikshit, *Excavations at Paharpur*, Bengal *MAI*, no. 55, p. 67 (terracotta panel at Paharpur).

by means of a sword in his right". An inscribed *stela* from the Nellore district of South India belonging to the twentieth year of the Pallava King Kampavarman registers a gift of land made by a village-assembly to a man for the pious act of another man (probably his father) "in cutting off the flesh from nine parts of his body and finally his head as an offering to the Goddess Bhaṭāri (i. e. Durgā)". Below the inscription is engraved "the figure of a person holding his severed head by the tuft in his left hand while the right hand grasps the sword". In four Pallava and early Chola sculptures we have the identical *motif* of a pair of male figures kneeling by the side of a four-armed Goddess who can be easily identified as Durgā or Mahishamardini. In all these examples the person kneeling to the proper right of the Goddess is shown in the act of offering his own head to the deity. In the two clear specimens, those from Trichinopoly and Pullamangai (ten miles to the south of Tanjore), this person is shown as in the North Indian examples in the act of seizing the tuft of his hair by the left hand while applying the sword held in his right hand to his neck.¹² In our opinion the absence of the Goddess in the two North Indian sculptures is due to the fact that these were intended not as cult-objects, but merely for the purpose of decorative design.¹³

We may draw some conclusions from the foregoing brief review. *Firstly*, the rite of head-offering to the deity has no direct sanction in the ritual works of the Śāktas and other sects. *Secondly*, it was nevertheless sufficiently well known in Ancient as well as in Mediaeval India to form the theme of Indian plastic and even pictorial art in widely different parts of the country. *Thirdly*, to judge from the literary references it was performed mostly for propitiation of the Goddess Durgā (called by different names) and sometimes in honour of other deities like Śiva or the unnamed guardian-deity of an early Tamil classic. *Fourthly and lastly*, the object of its performance was as a rule to win some favour for the devotee himself or for others, but in some cases it was done purely in a spirit of supreme sacrifice.

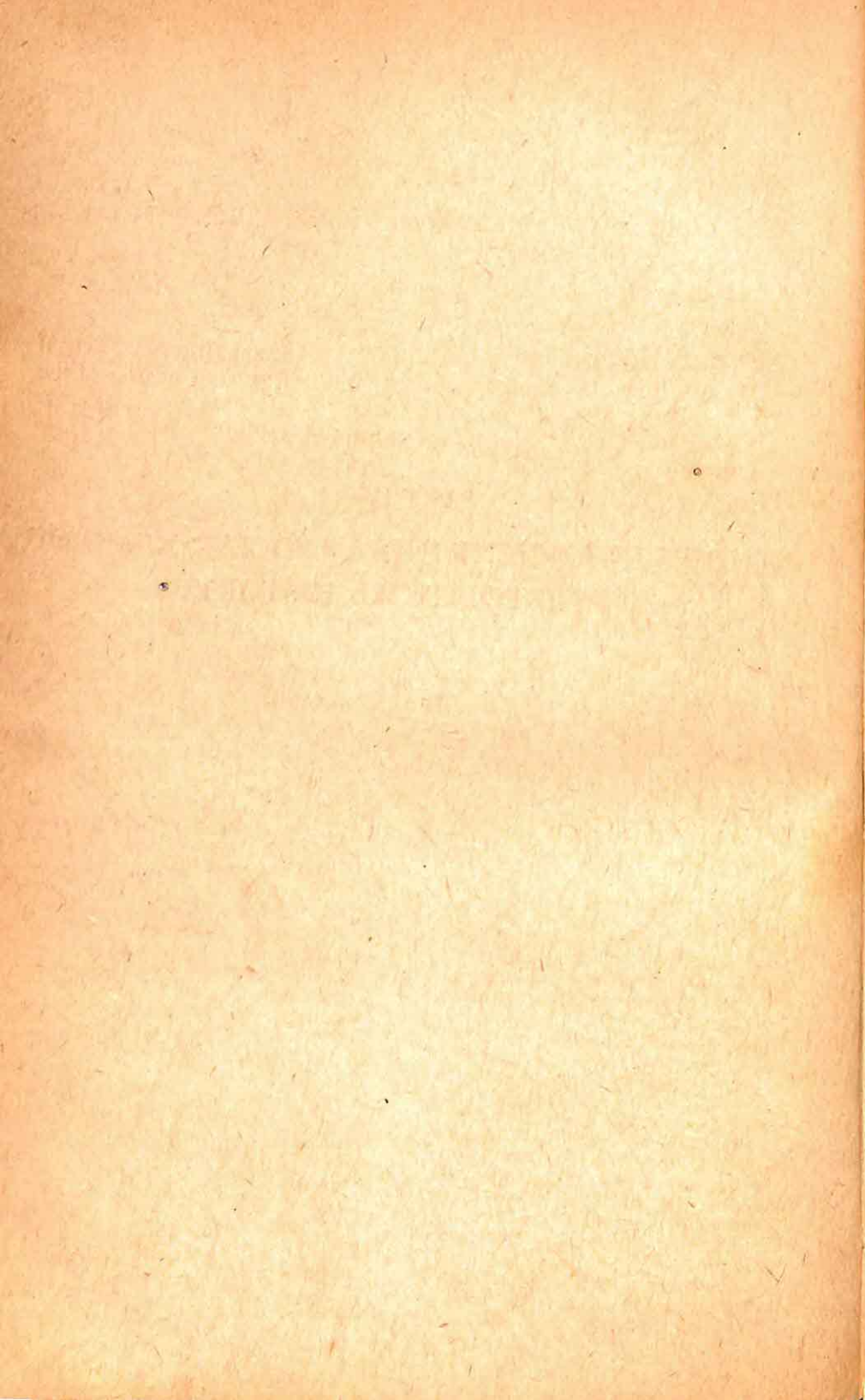
¹² (a) F. H. Gravely, C. Sivaramamurti and other curators, *Guide to the Archaeological Galleries, Madras Government Museum*, p. 30 (sculpture in Madras Museum); (b) *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. XII no. 106 (inscribed *stela* with figure from Nellore District); (c) J. Ph. Vogel, *The Head-offering to the Goddess in Pallava Sculpture*, BSOS, VI pp. 539-43, with four plates (sculptures in Draupadī ratha and Varāha Cave at Mamalla-

puram, at the Lower Cave of Trichinopoly and at temple of Pullamangai).

¹³ The suggestion of the late Rao Bahadur K. N. Dikshit (vide ref. under fn 11 above) that the plaque in question refers to 'the life of Buddha himself when he cut off his long hair with his sword just before he turned a recluse' is erroneous. The clue to the correct identification of this group of sculptures was first given by Professor Vogel (vide ref. under fn 12 above).

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PART IV

STUDIES IN ANCIENT INDIAN SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS
AND POLITICAL HISTORY •



CHAPTER XVI

TWO HISTORICAL CHARACTERS OF ANCIENT BENGAL— DIVYA AND BHĪMA*

INTRODUCTORY

Among the most interesting episodes of the Ancient History of Bengal may be mentioned the short-lived occupation, in the last quarter of the eleventh century A.D., of Varendrī (North Bengal), the ancestral seat of the Pāla kings, by a line of chiefs belonging to the humble Kaivarta ('fishermen') caste. The founder of this line was Divya (otherwise called Dibboka or Diboka) originally an officer of the Pāla kings, who was succeeded in turn by his brother Rudoka and his nephew Bhīma.¹

The material for reconstructing the lost history of Divya are remarkably scanty. Leaving aside popular tales, the evidence in favour of his historical existence was confined till lately to the scanty references in a few copper-plate inscriptions.² The fortunate discovery of a manuscript of the *Rāmacharita* ('the chronicle of the Epic hero Rāmachandra and of King Rāmapāla') by the late Mm. Haraprasad Sastri in 1897 and its publication by the same scholar in 1910, followed by an improved edition with an English translation by three other Indian scholars in 1939, have made it possible for the first time to unlock at least to some

* The above chapter has been translated into English practically without change from the Presidential Address delivered by the present writer at the third Annual Session of the *Divya Commemoration Celebration* in 1343 B.S. at Mahasthan in North Bengal near Bogra (the then headquarters of the Bogra District) and published by the Divya Smṛiti Samiti in the same year.

¹ The extensive literature that has grown up in recent years in the academic circles of Bengal ever since the publication of the unique MS. of the *Rāmacharitam* by Mm. Haraprasad Sastri (*Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* Vol III) in 1897 around the various aspects of the character and career of Divya and Bhīma is represented *inter alia* by the following monographs and chapters on the general history of Ancient Bengal : (a) *The Pālas of Bengal* (Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal Vol V No. 3, 1913) by R.D. Banerji;

(b) *The Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol I, Chap. VI (Calcutta 1936) by Dr. H.C. Ray; (c) *The revolt of Divvoka against Mahipāla II and other revolts in Bengal* by Dr. R.C. Majumdar in the *Dacca University Studies*, Vol. I No II (April 1936); (d) *The Rāmacharitam* of Sandhyākara Nandin, edited with *Sanskrit commentaries* and English trans. by Dr. R.C. Majumdar, Dr. Radhagovinda Basak and Pandit Nanigopal Banerji Kavyatirtha (1939) Introduction; (e) *Bāṅgālir Itihasa* (in Bengali) by Niharranjan Ray (1st editoin-1356 B.S.) Chapter X; (f) *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed by Dr. R.C. Majumdar (1957) Ch II pp. 28.

² Vide (a) Belava 'grant' (meaning copper-plate inscription recording grant) of Bhojavarman (*Ep. Ind.* Vol XII pp. 39-41); (b) Manahali grant of Madanapāla (*JASB* Vol LXIX, Part I p. 68); (c) Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva (*Ep. Ind.* Vol II p. 350).

extent the secret of Divya's career and that of his successors on the throne.³ The author of this precious work, Sandhyākara Nandin, composed it in the reign of Madanapāla, the youngest son of Rāmapāla, who ascended the throne after the death of his elder brother Kumārapāla and nephew Gopāla iii. From the fact that the author's father occupied, according to his own account, the high office of 'Minister of Peace and War' (*Sāndhivigrahaika*) under the Pāla kings, we can infer that he had ample opportunities for acquainting himself at first hand with the course of contemporary events. Nevertheless the history of Divya is still plunged in obscurity, and it is feared, will remain so for a long time to come.

The reason for our continued ignorance of the basic facts of Divya's career has to be found in the characteristic qualities of the historical work just mentioned. Although ranking as our only complete contemporary source for the history of Divya and his family, the *Rāmacharita* suffers from serious defects and shortcomings which detract from its historical value. Not to speak of the single faulty manuscript with an incomplete commentary on which all the editions of this work are based, the *Rāmacharita* belongs to the literature of artificial poetry (*kāvya*). The defects of a historical composition proceeding from the pen of a poet who uses the intricacies of the *kāvya* style are sufficiently obvious. In a work of this character it is in general idle to expect regard for definiteness of topography and chronology and connected narrative of events, not to speak of careful analysis of the historical characters. The *Rāmacharita* is no exception to this general rule. It is, beyond doubt, almost completely free from that undue preponderance of the descriptive element as compared with the narrative, which disfigures for instance the *Gauḍavaho* of Vākpatirāja and the *Kumārapālacharita* of Hemachandra. Not without reason does the poet claim for his work that 'its interest remained abiding or account of the events described.'⁴ Nevertheless it must be admitted that the historical value of this work has been greatly impaired for another reason. The *Rāmacharita* is throughout written in *double entendre*, its verses from first to last applying in one sense to Rāmachandra, the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and in another to Rāmapāla, the Pāla King. As the poet proudly observes⁵, his work recording the noble achievements of Rāma, the lord of the Raghus, and Rāmapāla, King of Gauḍa, is the *Rāmāyaṇa* of the Kali Age, and he himself is the Vālmiki of the same Age. In performing this difficult feat, the poet has, it is true, preserved the order of events in the *Rāmāyaṇa* story. But this has been neglected in the parallel history of the Pāla kings. What is most regrettable is that the facts recorded

³ The two editions of the *Rāmacharita* are *The Rāmacharita of Sandhyākara Nandin* (edited by Mm. Haraprasad Sastri, *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol II No. I) and the *Rāmacharitam* of Sandhyākara Nandin..... edited by Dr. Majumdar, Dr. Basak

and Pandit N. Banerji (as above) and published by the Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, 1939.

⁴ The phrase in the original (*Kaviprasāsti*, verse 6) is *ghaṭanāparisphuṭarasa*.

⁵ In *Kaviprasāsti* verse 11.

by the author, while sufficiently clear in the case of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story, are so obscure with regard to contemporary events that a commentary, which is unfortunately incomplete, is our only guide for comprehending their true import. Next to the obscurity of its account shared by the *Rāmacharita* with most other historical *kāvya*s may be mentioned the strong prejudices of the author of this work. Belonging to a family which had held a distinguished office under the Pāla kings, he could not but view the occupation of the heart of the Pāla kingdom by Divya as a wicked act of usurpation and nothing more. It is therefore in the fitness of things that he should (I 38) characterize Divya as a robber (*dasyu*) and covertly compare Divya's act with the abduction of Sītā by the demon-king Rāvaṇa described in Vālmiki's Epic.⁶ We may well surmise that if a chronicler of Divya's party had wielded the pen, he would not have shrunk from painting Divya and his famous nephew Bhima as the saviours of Varendri from the tyranny of his predecessor Mahīpāla ii, in the guise of the divine hero Kṛishṇa emancipating the people from the tyranny of the wicked King Kaṁsa. In the interest of historical truth, therefore, we should beware of accepting at its face value any statement of the Pāla court-poet, which is derogatory to Divya and his family. On the other hand, we may safely accept as a historical fact any admission of the author that is derogatory to the Pāla kings or favourable to their enemies.⁷

Divya's rise to power—its historical background.

In the commentary on *Rāmacharita* (I, 12 and 29), it is said of Rāmāpāla that he rescued the Earth which had been submerged beneath the weight of the bad Kaivarta king, and again that he destroyed the comfort of his enemy, the Kaivarta king. These two statements of the commentator are our only authority (which indeed there is no reason to disbelieve) for the view that Divya's line belonged to the humble Kaivarta caste. We have reasons to believe that Divya occupied a high office under the Pāla kings, since the commentator in his explanation of a verse quoted above (I. 38) characterises him as an officer sharing the royal fortune.⁸ We may also infer that Divya attained high military renown because we are told in the record of Prince Bhojavarman mentioned above that his grandfather Jātavarman, a contemporary of king

⁶ The parallel which suggests itself between the career of Divya in eleventh-century Bengal and that of Oliver Cromwell in seventeenth century England is correct in so far as the latter was similarly stigmatised after his death by the historians of the Stuart party as a hypocrite and a reprobate.

⁷ The above estimate of the historical

value of the *Rāmacharita* is an amplification and supplementation of the imperfect sketch in Mm. H. Sastri's edition of the work, *MASB* Vol. III p. 2.

⁸ *Māmsabhuja* in the original explained by the commentator in Divya's case as *Lakshmyah amśam bhuñjānena bhṛityena*.

Vigrahapāla iii (Mahīpāla II's father), surpassed the strength of Divya's arms. It is probable that this refers to a defeat inflicted upon Divya after his acquisition of Varendrī at the hands of the Eastern prince.

The greatest achievement of Divya's career was the occupation of the land of Varendrī after slaying Mahīpāla II of the long-established Pāla line of kings. To understand the significance of Divya's rise to power, it is necessary to recall in the first place the salient traits of the character of his unfortunate predecessor. On this point there has been a sharp division of opinion among scholars in recent times, which is based upon their contrary interpretation of a few verses and extracts in the *Rāmacharita*. A group of connected verses, technically called *kulaka* (I. 31-38), briefly mentions the train of events leading in the one sense to the abduction of Sitā by Rāvaṇa and in another sense to the seizure of Varendrī by Divya. In the first of these verses (I. 31) we are told that Rāmapāla suffered great mental anguish when his father died, and his brother Mahīpāla II 'intent on pursuing impolitic acts' (*anītikārambharata*) ascended the throne. Accepting this last reference in its general sense, one set of scholars further refers to the two following verses (I.32 and 36) of the same *kulaka*. In the former verse, as explained by the commentator, the king (*bhūmibhṛit*) is said to be given to wonderful tricks and to be hard like a pavement of stone, while the latter verse is explained by the commentator to mean that Mahīpāla was given to non-observance of truth and policy.⁹ Reference is made by the same scholars to a preceding verse (I.22) where we read that the night of the world, full of darkness, fell upon men, because of the vices (*vyasana*) of Rāmapāla's impolitic (*durnayabhāk*) elder brother and was dispelled by Rāmapāla through his majesty. From the above explanation it follows that Mahīpāla was addicted to impolitic acts, he was an adept in trickery, he was hard-hearted like stone, and he habitually violated the dictates of truth and policy.¹⁰

The view of the opposite school of scholars is based primarily upon the interpretation of the vital phrase *anītikārambharata* in verse I. 31 strictly after the commentator's explanation. Mahīpāla, we are told, disregarded the advice of his minister who was skilled in the six types of foreign policy, his troops were greatly alarmed at the onslaught of the assembled forces of the feudatories so that while some abandoned their arms, others had their bound-up hair dishevelled and others again began to run away, and those who remained on the battle-field suffered heavy loss of their own accord. Without caring to acquire sufficient strength Mahīpāla nevertheless embarked on a furious struggle with the

⁹ The phrase used in *Rāmacharita* (I.36) is *bhūtanayātrānayuktadāyāde* explained by the commentator in Rāmapāla's case as *bhūtaṁ satyaṁ nayo nītaṁ taylorarakshane yuktāḥ prasakto dāyādo bhrātā Mahīpāla yasya*.

¹⁰ In setting forth the viewpoint of the first group of scholars referred to above we have combined the arguments of Mm. H. Śastri (*op. cit.* Vol. III pp. 1-3) and Mr. R. D. Banerji (*op. cit.*, p. 84).

countless forces of the assembled feudatories, and was submerged in the fight. According to the scholars just referred to, this was the only impolitic act of Mahipāla meant by the poet. Turning to the other extracts, the same scholars argue that the word *bhūmibhṛit* in the verse I. 32 refers not to Mahipāla but to an underground prison, while the extract in the commentary on I. 36 (with the reading *tayoḥ rakshaṇe* in place of *tayor-arakshaṇe*) really means that Mahipāla was engaged in the observance of truth and policy. Another incident of Mahipāla II's reign mentioned by the poet, namely his imprisonment of his two younger brothers Rāmapāla and Śūrapāla is explained away by these scholars by the argument of the poet's open and professed partisanship for his hero Rāmapāla and that of the just grounds for Mahipāla II's act in imprisoning them. From the above arguments it follows that Mahipāla's impolitic act consisted solely in the fact that in disregard of the advice of his minister he confronted the formidable forces of his feudatories with his few dispirited troops, but otherwise he was constantly engaged in observing the dictates of truth and policy.¹¹

In deciding between the two contrary views set forth above, we have first to admit that the commentary on I. 22 explains Mahipāla's vice (*vyasana*) in the text to mean his addiction to fighting (*yudhhavyasana*). Nevertheless we are unable to accept this second interpretation of Mahipāla's character as correct. Witness the significance of the opprobrious term addicted (*rata*) in the phrase *anītikārambharata* applied to Mahipāla in the verse I. 31 quoted above. With this we may compare the phrase *bhūtanayātrāṇayukta* in the other verse I. 36 where *atrāṇa* is quite naturally explained by the commentator as *arakshaṇa* (non-protection) and *yukta* ('engaged') is significantly taken by him to mean *prasakta* ('addicted'). There is again no cogent reason for taking the word *bhūmibhṛit* in verse I. 32 in the unusual sense of 'an underground prison' in place of its normal meaning as 'king'. The above explanations admirably fit in with another fact recorded in the *Rāmacharita* I. 36-37 about Mahipāla. The king, we are told, threw his brother into prison under the foolish notion that Rāmapāla would deprive him of his sovereignty. It was, as the poet further observes, at the instigation of envious people that Mahipāla was led to suspect the possibility of danger from his brother. For a king who was inordinately devoted to the violation of truth and policy it was but natural to subject his blameless brother to inhuman punishment at the instigation of evil advisers.

We may notice in the next place the significance of the most spectac-

¹¹ In summarizing the view of the second group of scholars as has been stated above, we have combined the arguments of Dr. H.C. Ray (*op. cit.*, pp. 337 ff), Dr. R.C. Majumdar in *Dacca University Studies*, ... pp. 126ff, Dr. R.C. Majumdar and others in edition

with Skt. commentaries and Eng. trans. of the *Ramacharitam*, Introduction, pp. XIV n. Dr. Nihar Ranjan Roy in *Bāṅgālir Itihāsa* pp. 488n, and Dr. R.C. Majumdar in *History of Bengal*, pp. 84ff.

ular incident in Mahīpāla's tragic career. This is his complete defeat in an unequal fight with his feudatories. When the author of the *Rāmācharita* speaks (I. 25) of Divya's act in killing 'the great king' (Mahīpāla ii), we can be sure that Divya's success was due to the issue of this great fight, although he may not himself have joined the rising. Whatever that may be, we can infer from the commentator's expressive phrase *militānantasāmāntachakra* meaning 'the countless body of the assembled feudatories' in I. 31 that the rising was not confined to one or two tracts, but was spread over the great part of the kingdom. Of the causes of this mass-uprising our records unfortunately have nothing to say, but we may reasonably attribute it to Mahīpāla's attempt to curtail or cut down the privileges of that powerful class. We have no reason to wonder at the fact that the king who was impolitic enough to imprison his blameless brother at the instigation of envious people would seek to interfere with the collective privileges of the chiefs. In the parallel instance from English history, King John who began by assassinating his blameless nephew Prince Arthur ended by starting such a course of general oppression in the kingdom that the nobles were compelled collectively to take up arms against him. More politic than the Bengal king, he submitted to his opponents so abjectly and completely as to save his kingdom and his life.

To test the soundness of our view that the rebellion of the feudatories was primarily a large-scale attempt on their part to safeguard their collective interests which were threatened by a tyrannical king, we may trace the most natural reaction of this movement upon the fortunes of the fallen dynasty. In the circumstances the feudatories after their crushing victory would proceed immediately to consolidate their authority in their respective areas, and the two younger brothers of the late King Śūrapāla and Rāmapāla, however deserving of compassion they might otherwise appear, would for the moment be left completely helpless. It would also follow that when at length Rāmapāla sought to recover his lost ancestral dominion, he would have no other choice than to purchase the support of the chiefs with large concessions. The course of incidents which we can trace by piecing together the disjointed evidence of the contemporary copper-plate inscriptions and the historical poem, fits in precisely with this hypothetical reconstruction of the history of the period. Of Śūrapāla it is said in the Manahali grant of Madanapāla that he was equal to Indra and Kārttikeya, that he was bold and skilled in policy and that the amplitude of his military equipment filled with alarm the hearts of his enemies in spite of their possessing excessive valour.

In the *Rāmācharita* Śūrapāla is vaguely credited with exercising sovereignty. This is supplemented by Dr. H. C. Ray (op. cit. p. 338) with the important information that the Manahali grant of Madanapāla directly refers to Śūrapāla as *narapati* or king. It would seem that in spite of the high eulogy of the poet Śūrapāla enjoyed a brief and

precarious spell of power in some corner of the Pāla kingdom. How Rāmapāla subsequently built up his strength from the depths of despair is vividly told in the *Rāmacharita* (I.40-45). The Prince, we are told, held his pair of arms to be useless, and although surrounded by friends and sons, he regarded his valour as vain: he thought lightly even of his royal position as he was bereft of his beloved Varendrī land. Filled, however, with a firm resolve, he visited amid great privations the territories of the forest chiefs and the feudatories, and gradually built up a league favourable to himself. The chiefs who had been goaded to revolt by the impolitic acts of Mahīpāla were now induced by the diplomacy of Rāmapāla and his ministers to veer round to the royal side. They became the king's principal helpers in recovering Varendrī, the ancestral seat of Pāla sovereignty.

One last argument that may be urged in favour of the view set forth above is that it is only thus that we can account for the rapid decline and fall of the Pāla dynasty after the overthrow of Divya's line. It appeared at first sight that the old glory of the Pālas was restored to them after the recovery of Varendrī. From a few verses of the *Rāmacharita* (III. 44-47) we learn that while in the east a king of the Varman dynasty honoured Rāmapāla with the gift of the best chariots and elephants, he vanquished the kings of Utkala and Kaliṅga in the south, and he conquered Kāmarūpa in the north-east. But these successes were in reality nothing but the unnatural glare of the lamp before its final extinction. From the facts of the situation we can legitimately infer that the feudatories, who had enough opportunities for consolidating their strength after victory over Mahīpāla, attained a predominant position in the kingdom, when Rāmapāla sought their help to crush his hated enemy. It was therefore quite in the fitness of things that some time after the composition of the *Rāmacharita* and the eighth regnal year of Madanapāla, Varendrī fell under the yoke of Vijayasena sprung from a line of feudatories in Rāḍhā. The weapon which Rāmapāla had forged for the destruction of Divya's line was turned into an instrument of destruction of his own son.

Estimate of Divya

Let us try at the conclusion of the foregoing discussion to form a correct estimate of Divya's career and character. *Prima facie* it would seem that a person who delivered the heart of his native land from the yoke of an admittedly impolitic and tyrannical king of the legitimate dynasty deserved well of the student of history. But the point requires further elucidation. In the verse (I. 38) quoted above, the author of the *Rāmacharita* characterises Divya not only as a *dasyu* (robber), but as an *upadhivratin* which is explained by the commentator to mean 'one who took to trickery as his vow or the work imposed upon him as a compulsory obligation'. This may be taken to mean that Divya, while fomenting

the rising against Mahīpāla as an imperative act of duty, turned it to his own advantage, and that while pretending to be Rāmapāla's friend, he seized the throne for himself after compassing Mahīpāla's death. Even if this were the true meaning of the poet, we would well hesitate to accept it as a correct version of events, for the *Rāmacharita*, as we have observed before, gives us only a one-sided version of incidents. Applying the test of probability we would further ask whether if Divya had seized the throne under pretence of befriending Rāmapāla, the people of Varendrī would have joined the side of the treacherous usurper against their lawful and long-suffering king of the legitimate dynasty. Let us then try to find out the alternative explanation of the phrase *upadhivratin* quoted above. When Mahīpāla sank beneath the attack of the formidable forces of the feudatories, his brothers who were heirs to the throne probably lay immersed in underground dungeons. In these circumstances it would be natural for the victorious chiefs to establish some sort of peace and order in their respective areas. As Varendrī enjoyed the unique distinction of being the ancestral seat of the Pāla kings, there were by contrast no lines of local chiefs like the Khadgas, the Śūras and the Senas of Rāḍhā and Vaṅga in that area. It would then follow that the people of Varendrī unlike those of other tracts were faced with the peril of complete anarchy after the eclipse of Mahīpāla's fortunes. We can well infer that the afflicted subjects in this situation would turn for protection to a high official like Divya, who responded to their appeal as an act of duty. Assuming this reconstruction of events to reflect the true history of Divya's occupation of Varendrī, we need not be surprised if the partisan poet should give a distorted version of the whole incident by affirming that Divya's real object was not to fulfil his duty of giving security to the people of the land, but to satisfy his own ambition.

It has been stated that Divya was called to rule over Varendrī by popular election. What is more, it has been seriously held that Divya was elected king by the people of Bengal in the 11th century A.D.¹² Though there are no grounds to support this view, we have enough reasons to believe that the sovereignty of Divya and his line was based upon the firm foundation of loyal devotion of the subjects. In the Manahali 'grant' of Madanapāla quoted above we are told in courtly language that Rāmapāla bore himself with patience, although troubled by the formidable attacks of the people on Divya's side, just as Indra was patient in spite of his being troubled with the attack of the demons. Probably Rāmapāla suffered a severe reverse when he attempted for the first time to recover Varendrī from Divya's possession. Does not this great success of Divya suggest that the heartfelt regard of the people of Varendrī was bestowed upon the new ruling house? The same conclusion

¹² This was the trend of the discussion at the fourth session of the Divya Smṛiti Samiti held at Patnitala in the Dinajpur District of North Bengal

in 1344 B.S. under the presidency of Mr. Ramaprasad Chanda the well-known Indian historian and archaeologist.

is borne out by the vivid description of Rāmapāla's campaign for the recovery of Varendrī in the *Rāmacharita* (I. 46-50; II. 1-49). When the great warrior Śivarāja, we are told, speedily crossed the Gaṅgā at Rāmapāla's behest and invaded Varendrī then being ruled by Divya's nephew Bhīma, he upset Bhīma's work of protection and threw the affairs of the districts and the villages into confusion, and filling the land with alarm, split it up with the power of his sword. Carrying out further the order of his master, he devastated the land, and thoroughly smashed the defence of the enemy so that no city could be inhabited at ease. Does not this unwonted barbarity of the invader indirectly prove the excessive regard of the people of Varendrī for their newly established line of rulers? Even when Śivarāja after his return announced to his master the result of his blood-stained expedition and declared that Rāmapāla's ancestral land had been as good as occupied by himself, Rāmapāla could not accept his view with complacency. He equipped a formidable force consisting of his own relatives and various feudatories, of which the magnitude is the surest index of the fact that the collective strength of the people of Varendrī was arrayed against him. Crossing the Gaṅgā by a bridge of boats, Rāmapāla engaged Bhīma in a fierce battle which ended in the latter's complete rout and capture by the overwhelmingly superior force of his antagonist. Even after this catastrophe Bhīma's forces were rallied by his valiant friend Hari who at first met with considerable success against Rāmapāla's son. But the latter triumphed in the end 'by exhausting the golden pitchers with his war-time gifts'. Rāmapāla used his dearly bought victory to wreak a terrible vengeance upon Bhīma and his family. The above account furnishes a fresh evidence of the extent to which loyalty to the newly established house of Divya had struck its roots deeply in the soil of Varendrī.¹³

Estimate of Bhīma

It is natural to couple with our estimate of Divya the founder of the new dynasty of Varendrī, that of his valiant and unfortunate nephew Bhīma with whom it was brought to an abrupt close. From the commentator's explanation of the verse I. 39 we learn that the sovereignty over Varendrī was enjoyed in turn by Divya, his younger brother Rudoka, and the latter's son Bhīma. While, however, none of the first two was able to base his rule on a firm foundation, the last was sufficiently well established in his sovereignty to be credited with the title of 'king' by the

¹³ For a less satisfactory estimate of Divya's career and character vide Dr. R.C. Majumdar in *Dacca University Studies* ... pp. 128ff. In view of the above discussion it seems strange that Dr. R.C. Majumdar has twice (*Rāmacharitam* edition, Introduction pp. XVI-XVII n and *History of Bengal*

Vol I p. 153n) charged the present writer with stating that Divya's advent was 'a popular reaction against the oppression and wickedness' of Mahipāla II, and that it was an assertion of the popular right to dethrone a bad and unpopular king and elect a popular chief in his place.

author of the *Rāmacharita*. In the verse just quoted the poet describes Bhīma as one who knew how to strike at the vulnerable point (*vivara-prahārakṛit*), and as one who was competent to work out any scheme (*kriyākshama*). The fullest tribute to Bhīma's high qualities as a ruler, which does honour to the poet, is paid by him (II 21-27) at the end of his account of Bhīma's tragic defeat and capture in battle. He was, we are told, the protector of those requiring protection, while the kings of his own party by joining him secured their own safety from the victorious enemy: thousands of soldiers belonging to hostile kings with all their military equipment sank completely in fighting with him: he was the abode of the goddess of learning as well as of prosperity: by getting him as king the world attained abundant prosperity while virtuous men obtained unsolicited charities and the earth found peace: he possessed the charitable nature of the wish-giving tree: he cast aside all unrighteousness and in his heart there dwelt the Lord Śiva and His spouse: he showed his nobleness of purpose by following a righteous course; he was not inclined towards avarice, and he never transgressed the bounds of propriety. A ruler who could extort such unstinted praise for the qualities of his head and heart from the enemy's partisan was no ordinary person.¹⁴ To us it seems that he can be compared only with one other ruler of Ancient Bengal. This is Gopāla, the founder of the Pāla dynasty, of whom it was said in the historical record of his son¹⁵ that he was made to grasp the hand of the goddess of fortune by the subjects for the purpose of avoiding the law of the jungle.¹⁶

If Bhīma had been favoured with Gopāla's good fortune, he might have breathed a new life into the decayed Pāla kingdom and kindled afresh the vital spark of Bengal. It might have been given to his powerful arms to bring under control the self-seeking chiefs of Bengal and become the real founder of a new dynasty broad-based upon the support of the

¹⁴ On the other hand Dr. R.C. Majumdar (*Dacca University Studies*... pp. 126-7) rightly rejects the statement (based upon a wrong reading of the relevant phrase in I 27 of *Rāmacharitam*) of Mm. H. Sastri (op. cit., p. 13) and of Mr. R.D. Banerji (op. cit., p. 91) that Bhīma built a suburban city called Damara close to the capital city of the Pāla Empire. With equal justice Dr. Majumdar (*Dacca University Studies*... p. 127) rejects the still more baseless statements of Mm. H. Sastri (loc. cit) about Divya's position as 'a chief of the Kaivartas who were smarting under this oppression of Mahipāla II and about Bhīma's taking advantage of the popular discontent to lead his Kaivarta subjects to rebellion'.

¹⁵ The ref. is to the relevant passage in

the Khalimpur inscr. of Dharmapāla (*Ep. Ind.* Vol IV p. 243), and *Gaudalekhamālā* p. 9 by Akshay Kumar Maitreya.

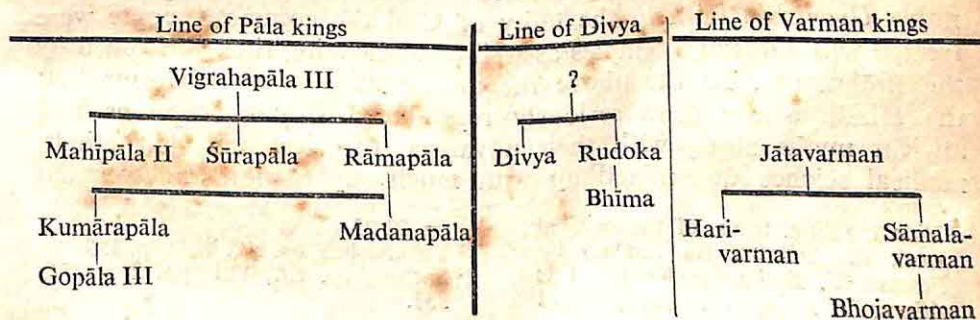
¹⁶ The above appears to us to be a truer estimate of Bhīma as a ruler than the brief summing-up by Dr. R.C. Majumdar (*History of Bengal*,... p. 154). When Dr. Majumdar in this, context fails to reconcile the high praise of Bhīma in the *Rāmacharita* II 21-27 quoted above with its reference in III 27 to Varendrī having been 'oppressed with cruel taxation before Rāmapāla's conquest and presumably therefore in Bhīma's reign he ignores the most natural explanation of a war-time necessity imposed upon an admittedly just and popular ruler because of the threat of invasion from outside.

people. In one word, the last chapter of the Ancient History of Bengal might have been written in an altogether different and more successful vein. But an inexorable destiny decreed otherwise. In the clash with the formidable forces of Rāmapāla the newly founded kingdom of Varendrī was smashed to pieces. With the slaying of Bhīma by the vengeful Pāla king vanished the last efforts to establish a kingdom based afresh on popular will in Bengal. In this lies the greatest tragedy of Bengal history.

The epilogue

After the downfall of the rule of Divya and Bhīma, their memories began to be blackened by the poets enjoying the patronage of the restored legitimate dynasty. In verse I 38 quoted above the author of the *Rāmacharita* characterised Divya as a robber and as one who took to trickery as a vow,⁶ while it suggested a parallel between Divya's occupation of Varendrī and the abduction of Sītā by the demon-king Rāvaṇa. In verse 15 of the Manahali inscription of Madanapāla quoted above the conflict between Rāmapāla and Divya's subjects was likened to the struggle between the gods and the demons. Verse 4 of the Kāmauli grant of Vaidyadeva adopting a parallel drawn by the author of the *Rāmacharita* described Rāmapāla's recovery of Varendrī after killing Bhīma as equivalent to that of Sītā by Rāmachandra after slaying Rāvaṇa. What is more, the last-named record deprived Bhīma of his royal title, designating him merely as a general (*kshaunināyaka*). When later the curtain was rung down upon the Ancient History of Bengal amid the clash of arms during a terrible political revolution, the Bengālī people, naturally forgetful of their past history, began to lose all recollection of the Pāla kings and their adversaries of Divya's line. It is strictly in accordance with historical justice that it has been left to our own times not only to recover this stirring chapter in the ancient history of our land, but also for the first time to subject the chief actors in the drama to the test of critical research.*

*We give below a synchronistic table of Divya's line and the other ruling dynasties of Bengal during the last quarter of the eleventh century A.D. in the light of the positive data in the relevant inscriptions as well as the indirect ref. in the commentary on verse I 39 of the *Rāmacharita* quoted above.



CHAPTER XVII

FACTORS OF DOWNFALL OF ANCIENT INDIAN POLITICAL CIVILISATION

The conquest of the principal kingdoms of Northern India by the Muslim Turks leading to their incorporation in the Sultanate of Delhi during the closing years of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century A.D. and the overthrow of all the powerful dynasties of Southern India by the same mighty power almost a century afterwards constitute, as we have stated in an earlier chapter (Chap. VI), the true dividing line between the Ancient and the Mediaeval periods of our history, as they signify one of the greatest catastrophes in the history of our ancient culture. It is, therefore, no wonder that the causes of this impressive phenomenon have engaged the attention of thoughtful Indians for some time past. The discussion was started over half a century ago by a distinguished Indian administrator, author and historian, the late Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt of the Indian Civil Service. In his work *A History of Civilisation in Ancient India* (Calcutta, 1890), the author begins by quoting with approval Alberuni's famous statement¹ charging the Hindus of his time in contrast with their predecessors with intellectual narrowness and arrogant self-conceit born of their neglect of foreign travel. This forms the prelude to the author's sombre picture of the political, social and religious condition of Northern India during the period of three or four centuries preceding the Muslim conquest. The main counts of his indictment are that India was then in the last stage of her political decline (because of her being parcelled out among warring petty kings and chiefs), that there was a gradual degeneracy of the people accompanied with the growing power of the priests (indicated by degradation of the Vaiśyas to the level of Śūdras and the subsequent formulation of the bold myth that all who were not Brāhmaṇas were Śūdras), that even in the sphere of manners and customs (as is proved by Alberuni's pointed reference² to the pitiable lot of widows) Hinduism was in the last stage of degeneracy, and that in contrast with the educated few who had the monopoly of the noble *Upanishad* faith in the unity of God the common people were treated with idols and temples as well as unmeaning rites performed by the Brāhmaṇas. To the above the author adds after Alberuni³ that the Hindu astronomers seriously reproduced silly conceptions and ancient myths along with their advanced theories, and that Hindu medical science was mixed up with much superstition and was the

¹ Vide the Eng. trans. of the original work of Alberuni (in Arabic) by Edward C. Sachau under the title *Alberuni's India*, ed. 1888, Vol I

pp. 22-23.

² Vide Sachau, *op. cit.*, Vol II p. 155

³ Sachau, *op. cit.*, Vol I pp. 265, 273, 331.

monopoly of a few. Concluding his damning estimate with a striking historical parallel, the author observes that India in the tenth and eleventh centuries resembled the Middle Ages of Europe with one essential difference. This lay in the fact that while the feudal barons of Europe ultimately mixed with the people and thus infused a new and vigorous life into the modern nations, the Indian caste-system prevented such a fusion and made the isolated Kshatriyas fall a swift prey to the foreign invaders.⁴

The problem of the causes of the headlong downfall of Indian powers in the closing years of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries has been discussed afresh by some Indian scholars in very recent times. In Chapter XII of his thoughtful work *A Survey of Indian History* (1947) which bears the title "*India on the eve of Muslim contact*," Sardar K. M. Panikkar gives a short but comprehensive survey of the condition of the country during the period preceding the Turkish conquest. Because of their complete immunity from foreign invasions for more than five hundred years before the time of Mahmud of Ghazni (a period of isolation unexampled in the history of the world), we read, the people lost their sense of patriotism and national honour, while they were filled (as is shown by Alberuni's statement quoted above) with consuming arrogance about their superiority to other nations. The same cause led to the weakening of the springs of national greatness, namely rigid discipline, joint endeavour for upholding the cultural values and subordination of material interests to the public welfare. Tracing the resulting decadence of India's civilization in different spheres of life, the author observes that the originally academic ideas of the four castes as well as the food and drink taboos were now accepted as divine regulations and enforced with surprising rigidity, that the style of artificial poetry (*kāvya*) degenerated into the display of extravagant conceits and artificial constructions as well as long and sensuous descriptions of debaucheries, that architecture and sculpture betrayed the same degeneration of taste, that *vāma-mārṅa* religious practices⁵ took deep root and infected even the advanced seats of learning, that the monasteries became the centres of luxury, idleness and vice. The general loosening of the moral code, the author continues, is testified to by the development of the *devadāsī* system,⁶ the composition of works on the lives of prostitutes by men of the highest social position and of known purity of life, as well as the obscene Tāntric literature and temple sculptures of the time. The crystallisation of the social life is indicated by the strict enforcement of the

⁴ The above account is summarized mostly in the author's own words from Mr. R. C. Dutt's work (*A History of Civilisation in Ancient India*, Vol III Book V, pp. 476-77, 479-82, 487-88, 494-95).

⁵ *Vāma-mārṅa*, lit. left-hand. This is the generic designation in the theological systems of Brahmanism and

Buddhism for a set of five religious practices in disregard of social conventions which were allowed to the worshippers of an intermediate order in an ascending scale of spiritual values. Vide below p. 368.

⁶ *Devadāsī*, literally meaning 'female slaves of a deity' is an euphemism for the class of temple prostitutes.

rigours of widowhood in high-class families. To the above the author adds that great disparity of wealth existed between the mercantile classes and the ordinary villagers, that a regular bureaucracy constituted the structure of Indian government, and that the Indian kingdoms were organised on a semi-military basis with large, though inefficient armies. While the Hindu social structure, the author sums up at the end not without some degree of inconsistency, had undergone a re-organisation which made it capable of resisting external pressure and the Hindu religion had received a vigorous impetus with forms and beliefs satisfying the masses and the intellectuals, while economic life was prosperous with accumulated wealth derived from five centuries of peace, the political structure was based on a corrupt bureaucracy and was weakened by the complete absence of patriotism and the idea of united resistance against the foreigner⁷.

A less complete analysis of the causes of collapse of the Ancient Indian political civilization has been presented by Dr. R. C. Majumdar in his work Ancient India (Varanasi 1952). In his penultimate chapter (Chap. XXI) significantly called "Degradation of Hindu society", the author attributes the narrow exclusiveness of the Hindu people in contrast with the catholicity of their predecessors (as testified to by Alberuni in the extract cited above on p. 352) to two factors. These are the rigidity of the caste system following the Brahmanical revival and the degradation of the position of women. In so far as the first factor is concerned, the Brāhmaṇas, we read, succeeded in establishing not without a hard and continuous struggle and in the teeth of opposition of the Kshatriyas, the essential features of the caste system comprising the ascendancy of their own order, the determination of caste by birth and the prohibition of inter-marriage and inter-dining among the castes, these features having no sanction in the ancient scriptures. Thereafter the Brāhmaṇas consolidated their position by introducing in utter violation of the letter and spirit of the ancient scriptures the new elements comprehending the doctrine of impurity of the Śūdras' food and touch and the restriction of the numbers of Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas till these last practically vanished from the Indian society and their descendants sank to the level of Śūdras. In this process of their self-aggrandisement the Brāhmaṇas were helped by the fact that the Rajputs who were descendants of the foreign Hūnas and Gurjaras as well as the aboriginal tribes, after being raised to the rank of Kshatriyas, had to look up to them for their social prestige and status. Among other evils of the caste system the author enumerates firstly, the degradation of the artisans and craftsmen; secondly, the perpetuation of class interests preventing the development of a truly national sentiment; and thirdly, the rise of a spirit of haughty exclusiveness which had the effect of closing the Hindu mind to the progress of science and specially of military science among other Asiatic nations.

⁷ The above is an abstract of the full description of the subject in Sardar

Panikkar's work above cited on pp. 129-38.

These statements are supported by quotation of a long extract from the work of Mr. R. C. Dutt mentioned above, as well as by reference to the striking parallel drawn by the same author between Ancient Indian and Mediaeval European history. Turning to the second factor, Dr. Majumdar seeks somewhat inconclusively to prove the degraded position of women just before the Turkish conquest by a number of quotations from the *Manu-Smṛiti*, a work belonging (as is well known) to the first two centuries before and after Christ. It remains to mention that the same scholar in Chapter XIV of his work cited above mentions as a distinctive feature of the public administration of the post-Gupta period the tendency towards the weakening of popular control and the establishment of an unchecked bureaucracy or autocracy in its place.

A much fuller discussion of the causes of downfall of the Ancient Indian kingdoms at the hands of the Turkish invaders, repeating some of the reflections of Sardar Panikkar quoted above, is that of Dr. A. L. Srivastava in his text-book called *The Sultanate of Delhi* (2nd ed., 1953). In the chapter of his work bearing the title "*Our country on the eve of the Arab invasion of Sindh*" the author sums up his brief historical survey by stating that although the condition of the people was good in other respects, the main drawback was the lack of political unity and the patriotic sense. In Chapter III entitled *India on the eve of Mahmud of Ghazni's invasion*, we are told that the Indian kings were weakened by the decline of the two paramount powers the Pratihāras and the Pālas in the North and mutual conflict between the later Chālukyas and the Cholas in the South, while the three centuries of immunity from foreign invasions since the Arab conquest of Sindh led the Indian rulers to neglect their armies and their frontier defence. For the reason last mentioned the Indian people lost touch with the new systems of warfare, and while losing completely their sense of patriotism and national ardour, they imbibed the belief (testified to by Alberuni in the extract cited above on p. 352) that they were a chosen people who could not associate with others. The decadence of India's civilization following from her complete isolation during the same period, the author continues, is proved firstly, by the degradation of literature and the fine arts; secondly, by the rigidity of the caste rules (as is illustrated by enforcement of the rigours of widowhood and of food and drink taboos); thirdly, by the degradation of religion (testified to by the popularity of the *vāma-mārga* and its evil influence even upon the advanced centres of learning); fourthly and lastly, by the moral degradation of the upper and middle classes (as is witnessed by the extension of the *devadāsī* system, the development of the Tāntric literature and the composition of works on the lives of prostitutes by the greatest scholars of the time). Though the country was economically rich and generally prosperous, the author concludes, there was a great disparity of wealth between the ruling families, the nobles and the merchant princes on the one hand and the village-folk on the other. Again in Chapter VI of his work called "*Muhammad of Ghur*"

the author distinguishes between the general and the special causes of the Indian defeat at the hands of the Sultans Mahmud of Ghazni and Muhammad of Ghur. Under the first head he mentions the lack of political unity and capable leadership among the Indians and their outworn military system as well as the lack of co-operation between the masses and their leaders, while by contrast he speaks of the use of shock-tactics by both the Sultans which paralysed the Indian resistance as well as the tremendous religious and military enthusiasm of the Turks such as was completely wanting among the Indians. Under the second head are included a number of miscellaneous points. Unlike the Turks, we read, the Indians neglected to find out the enemy's strength and the geography of the country beforehand, and further to ravage the enemy's lands for cutting off his supplies: their armies unlike those of the Turks were wanting in the two divisions of the advanced guard and the reserve: in contrast with the Turkish favourite weapon of the bow and the arrow the Indians were equipped with the sword, while unlike the mobile Turkish cavalry their strength lay in elephants. Repeating in part the above arguments in the last chapter (Chapter XIX) bearing the title "*The Sultanate in retrospect*", the author observes that the factors enabling the invaders rapidly to overrun Hindustan were, *firstly*, the impossibility of effective combination against the foreigner because of parcelling out of the country into numerous independent States; *secondly*, the political apathy of the masses and their lack of patriotism; *thirdly* and above all, the use of shock-tactics by the two Sultans.⁸

It will appear from a consideration of the views set forth above that they present in their totality an admirably comprehensive survey of the condition of the country facilitating its conquest by the Turkish invaders. As these views appear nevertheless on closer inspection to be imperfect in some respects and misleading on other points, we propose to discuss the whole question somewhat fully under a number of different heads.

I. POLITICAL FACTOR. The view that India on the eve of the Muslim conquest was parcelled out among petty kings and chiefs justifying the further statement that she was then in the last stage of her political decline is beyond doubt a gross historical exaggeration. It is reminiscent of the picturesque phrase 'anarchical autonomy' which a well-known British historian of India who belonged to the last generation of civilians in the climax of British rule in this country⁹ applied to the normal condition of our country in pre-British times. It is true that throughout this last period of independence of the Ancient Indian dynasties there was no single State of the size of the Empire of the Mauryas. Nevertheless the distinctive feature of the Indian political situation of the time was not the parcelling out of the country among petty kings and chiefs, but its division into a relatively limited number of large territorial States with several

⁸ For ref. vide Dr. A.L. Srivastava's work above mentioned pp. 1-12, 20-23, 38-41, 61-66, 83-86, 394-98.

⁹ Namely, V.A. Smith, *Early History of India*, 4th ed. p. 371.

centuries of existence to their credit. With this we may mention that the old imperial ideal was still such a living force as to prompt the leading Indian rulers frequently to make a bold bid for empire in the traditional fashion. The political history of the period, accordingly, is one of almost unceasing struggle between a few powerful States for supremacy which doubtless had the result of frittering away the economic and military resources of the country at the time of its sorest peril, and what is more, of creating an atmosphere of mutual distrust among the contending States which prevented their effective combination against the common foe. It is, however, well worth remembering in this connexion the verdict of a well-known British administrator and historian of India, who belonged to the older type of civilians living for long periods of time during the United East India Company's rule in this country¹⁰ that even the divisions of the Indian princes by prolonging their resistance and weakening the invaders' strength helped to slow down the progress of Islam in India. On the other hand the facts of history bear out in substance the charge of lack of capable leadership among the Indians. It is indeed remarkable that even the crisis of the series of foreign invasions failed to produce a single leader of sufficiently commanding political and military talents to unite the Indians of his time—as Chandragupta Maurya had united long before the people of the Indus valley against the Macedonian garrisons left behind by Alexander—for the overthrow of the foreign enemy. In the pusillanimous submission of Rājyapāla, the last Pratihāra king of Kanauj to Mahmūd of Ghazni and the successful raid of Ikhtyar-ud-din Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji against the defenceless Buddhist monks of Bihar, we have striking examples of the opportunity which the political vacuum caused by the decay of the old empires from time to time gave to the daring enemy from outside. That the Indian kings nevertheless with all their political and military weakness were capable of beating back the enemy in the open battle-field is proved by the crushing victories won over Sultan Muhammad of Ghur by Bhīma II, descended in the female line from the preceding Vāghela dynasty of Gujarat in 1178 as well as by Prithvirāja, the Chauhān ruler of Ajmer and Delhi in 1191. To this we have to add that in the tenth century the Pratihāras of Kanauj, according to the admission of the Muslim historians themselves, were strong enough militarily and politically to present a successful barrier against the incursions of the Arab invaders from their base in Sindh. Turning to another statement that because of the centuries of their immunity from foreign attack the Indians utterly lost their patriotic sense and were infected with political apathy, it is inconceivable on *a priori* grounds that the masses even in the hard school of their experience of the barbarous methods of warfare of the invaders could not be roused from their alleged old-time lethargy to a sense of the urgent need of self-defence.

¹⁰ Vide the analysis of the causes of 'progress of Islam in India' in Mount-

stuart Elphinstone's work *History of India*, p. 313.

In truth we may infer from the prolonged resistance offered even by the petty chiefs in their strongholds and the people in their selected areas that the masses were by no means lacking in the will and the power to resist the enemy even at the risk of his barbarous reprisals. The Indians, indeed, are repeatedly recorded as taking advantage of the weakness of individual Sultans to recover their lost territories, or at least to keep them in constant turmoil so that the more powerful of the foreign rulers had to begin their task of reconquest afresh.¹¹ Whether in the circumstances of the situation the Indians could be expected to imbibe 'a common national sentiment' or 'national consciousness' or 'patriotic and national behaviour' or to maintain 'the springs of national greatness' (which are the fruits of a mature political civilisation) may be seriously questioned. As regards the internal structure of the Indian States, it may be stated that the unimpeachable evidence of the historical inscriptions bears witness to the development of an elaborate bureaucratic organisation coming down from the centuries before the Christian era. While it is true that the dishonesty and oppression of the officials form the stock-subject of complaint in our literature from early times (as is testified to by references in Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*, *Manu-Smṛiti*, Kālidāsa's *Śakuntalā* and more fully in Kshemendra's satirical poems as well as Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarangīnī*), there is nothing to show that the evil was made worse in the centuries immediately preceding the Muslim conquest. On the contrary the occasional hints from our authentic sources, such as the tribute paid by the Muslim historians of this period to the efficient government of the Pratihāras of Kanauj, may be taken to prove the honesty and efficiency of the rulers as well as their officials. What little reliance can be placed upon the confident reference to a general drift towards unchecked bureaucracy or autocracy during the post-Gupta period has been sought to be proved in Chapter VIII of the present work, pp.... The real weakness of the Indian administrations lay in the influence of the great feudatory families whose power and ambition constituted a perpetual threat to the stability of the central government. By contrast the government of the Sultans who conquered the country was in strict theory a theocracy with Islam as the State-religion and in practice a military despotism ruthlessly weeding out the incompetent in the perpetual struggle for succession to the throne. Nor can it be denied that the Indian rulers failed to match that combination of military talent and administrative capacity which constituted the strength of

¹¹ Among the individual chiefs who offered prolonged resistance against the Turks may be mentioned (a) Harirāja, brother of Prithvirāja Chauhan (temp. Muhammad of Ghur) (b) 'Bartu' a corruption of Prithu (temp. Iltutmish) and (c) Hammiradeva (temp. Alauddin Khilji). The Kho-kars of the Punjab, the Mewatis to the

south of Delhi and various Rajput communities in the modern Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh States long resisted the Sultan's government. Periodical recoveries of the lost territories by the Hindus took place under the weak descendants of Sultan Mahmud and the immediate successors of Sultans Qutbuddin and Iltutmish.

some of their principal adversaries.¹² India needed a Titan, but she found only pygmies.

II. MILITARY FACTOR. To hold with some of the scholars quoted above that the Indians through the long history of the Turkish conquest of their country were prevented by their 'inheritance of caste', 'their pride in isolationism and insularity' and their 'legacy of prolonged immunity from foreign attack' from learning the 'lessons of the new system of warfare is to charge them with a degree of intellectual perversity, which is unworthy of serious belief. In the similar process of completion of British dominion in India the rulers of the Maratha States who admittedly offered the most prolonged and obstinate resistance against the advance of the Western power were not prevented by their rules of caste and their geographical isolation from adopting the bold (though eventually disastrous) experiment of training their battalions on the Western model. In truth it was not for their social and geographical aloofness but for their want of leaders with sufficient talents that the Indians of the eleventh and twelfth centuries failed to adapt their time-honoured system of warfare (as Sivaji the Maratha was destined to do in the seventeenth century) to the requirements of the new situation. Incidentally, it is worth remembering that the alleged isolation of India for the longest period in the history of any country is disproved by the recorded instances of more or less extensive exchanges of visits between the Buddhist monks of India on the one side and those of China and Tibet on the other during the tenth and the eleventh centuries, which resulted in the translations of large numbers of Indian Buddhist texts into the sacred literature of those lands. It is, however, correct to state, as Dr. Srivastava has observed, that the shock tactics—the sudden raid followed by the equally swift victorious return home—which was frequently resorted to by the two great Sultans of the houses of Ghazni and Ghur was one of the main secrets of their success. By contrast the Indian leaders, as we learn from the circumstantial accounts of the Muslim historians, repeatedly betrayed such amazing lack of vigilance and elementary prudence as almost to be deemed to have deserved their fate at the bar of history. Another and a still more potent cause of the military superiority of the Turks was, as has been rightly pointed out by the last-named author, their mighty enthusiasm, a sentiment which, it is well to remember, was derived as much from the prospect of plunder of the colossal treasures stored in the Indian temples and palaces as from zeal for their newly acquired religion. That this was the greatest single factor in enabling the Turks to conquer most of the country after a hard struggle of more than three centuries is proved

¹² The above view of the distinctive characteristics of rule of the early Muslim invaders of India may be illustrated by two refs. On the government of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni,

vide Barthold, *Turkistan down to the Mongol Invasion*, Eng. tr. pp. 287-92. The government of the Delhi Sultans is described by A.L. Srivastava, *The Sultanate of Delhi*, pp. 135-36, 319-22.

by the parallel example of the Seljuk Turks of the eleventh and the Ottoman Turks of the fifteenth century who succeeded in despoiling and eventually destroying the Byzantine Empire in spite of its immunity from the characteristic weakness of the Indian political and social system. The Indians, again, in contrast with their enemies were temperamentally more given to the display of individual heroism than the thought of a collective victory. As the Mughal Emperor Babur said of the Hindus of his time, they knew how to die but not how to win a victory. The Rajputs, in particular, although they were remarkable for their bravery and contempt of death, were inspired by a high sense of chivalry and military honour, which made them often unfit for practical success in warfare. Another potent factor of the defeat of the Indians hinted at by the scholar quoted last was that cavalry always remained the weak spot in their armoury, although it is a fact that the kings lavished much of their revenues on the import of horses at heavy cost from the lands of Western Asia. The inferior strategy and tactics of the Indians, as has been rightly remarked by the same scholar, are illustrated by the fact that unlike their adversaries they appear frequently to have neglected a preliminary reconnaissance of the ground as well as relative strength of the combatants and failed to provide for a reserve division of their forces before the commencement of the fight. From later historical analogies it would further appear that the armed levies of the vassal chiefs constituting the core of the Indian armies could not compare in discipline and in equipment with the regular troops of their enemies.¹³ Among contributory causes of the defeat of the Indians may be mentioned the treachery of individual chiefs or high officers, and the clever diplomacy as well as subtle propaganda of the enemy, of which we have more or less direct indications in the accounts of the Muslim historians.

III. SOCIAL FACTOR. While there is some justification for the criticism by Mr. R.C. Dutt, Sardar K.M. Panikkar and especially Dr. R.C. Majumdar of the condition of the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras as well as of women in later times from the standpoint of modern standards of social justice and equality, the interpretation of this development by some of the scholars quoted above involves some serious misconceptions.

¹³ The Indians' lack of vigilance is illustrated by the successive lightning campaigns of Sultan Mahmud as well as the campaigns of Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar against "Nudiah" and of Alauddin Khalji against Deogiri. The campaigns of Muhammad bin Qasim in Sind and of Malik Kafur against the Pāṇḍya kingdom as well as the capture of the forts of Baran by Qutb-ud-din Aibak and of Ranthambhor by Alauddin were facilitated by Indian treachery. The type of clever diplomacy employed by the Turkish commanders is illustrated by the story

of prophecy of Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar's conquest of West Bengal which was understandably put into the mouths of the Brāhmanas of Varanasi, and the plea of starting to take service under the Raja of Warangal taken by Alauddin Khalji in his lightning campaign against the Yādava king of Deogiri. The type of subtle propaganda is illustrated by the stories of miracles performed by reputed Muslim saints settled in the Indian capitals for the discomfiture of the hostile local rulers.

The rules relating to the respective duties and occupations of the castes and the restrictions about caste intermarriages as well as food and drink, so far from being originally academic in character, are laid down in the Brahmanical works on Sacred Law (*Smṛitis*) from the very first as solemn injunctions, which were enforced by moral and spiritual as well as political sanctions. The division of society into four primary castes based upon birth is derived in these works from the fundamental Vedic doctrine of Divine creation of the social order. As regards specific features of the later caste system allegedly having no sanction in the ancient scriptures we may point out that the ascendancy of Brāhmaṇas and the determination of caste by birth form two of the fundamental tenets of the ancient *Smṛitis*, which indeed carry the distinction between castes into minute details of dress and etiquette, and whose example led the authors of technical treatises to the point of assigning to the different castes separate residential quarters in the towns as well as distinct types of furniture and dwelling-houses. The complete segregation of the despised classes likewise goes back to the oldest *Smṛitis*. The authentic instances of individuals of all classes (including the Brāhmaṇas) disregarding the *Smṛiti* injunctions about caste-occupations and inter-marriages that we find in the historical records as well as the works of general literature, only prove (what is indeed indicated by the internal evidence of the *Smṛitis* themselves) that the rules from first to last were not followed with absolute rigidity. Of a hard struggle of the people continuing almost to the end of the ancient period and of the stubborn opposition of the Kshatriyas in particular such as could only arise from the organised resistance of the classes concerned, there is in the records of this period hardly any trace, the only conspicuous instance being the rise of the *Liṅgāyat* sect in the Kanarese tract as an anti-Brāhmaṇical movement in the twelfth century. On the other hand we have the direct testimony of sources other than the Brāhmaṇical *Smṛitis* to prove that their rules were generally observed in practice. Equally baseless is the statement of Dr. R. C. Majumdar (somewhat inconsistent with the same scholar's reference to the stubborn opposition of the Kshatriyas) that the subservience of the Rajputs who were raised from their aboriginal and foreign descent to the status of Kshatriyas enabled the Brāhmaṇas to establish their unchallenged supremacy. The later prohibition of inter-caste marriages and degradation of the Vaiśya to the level of the Śūdra along with the declaration of impurity of the Śūdra's food and touch were not so much innovations against the letter and spirit of the older *Smṛitis* as logical developments of their doctrines. The extreme *Smṛiti* doctrine of the extinction of Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas belongs only to the period following the Muslim conquest when the Indian kings had mostly lost their independence. In so far as the *Smṛiti* doctrine of ascendancy of the Brāhmaṇas is concerned, it is well to remember that it was accompanied from the first by rules imposing upon this class a life of rigid discipline and of non-attachment to worldly objects along with strong

denunciations of individuals falling short of this high standard. Some of the important *Smṛiti* authorities in later times, namely, the commentators Viśvarūpa, Vijñāneśvara and Haradatta, chose deliberately to restrict the older doctrines of pre-eminence of the Brāhmaṇas with their corollaries of Brāhmaṇical immunities and privileges within reasonable limits. To say in the face of these facts that the whole later development of the caste system was due to the selfish ambition of a cunning and unscrupulous priesthood seeking to establish its supremacy without the sanction of the ancient scriptures and in the teeth of obstinate resistance of the other classes is to indulge in a misreading of history. The true reason and in fact the ultimate historical justification for the thorough systematisation of the branches of civil and religious law in the *Smṛiti* digests, with its accompanying tightening of the old social disabilities, is to be found, as we suggested elsewhere (Chap. VII pp. 181, 183) in the fact that they marked India's supreme effort on the intellectual plane to meet the challenge (the most formidable she had encountered so far) to the existence of her soul and her culture presented by the destructive inroads of the new invading races with their programme of wholesale subversion of the indigenous social and religious order. The measure of India's success may be gauged from the extent to which in contrast with the contemporary civilisations of Iran, Central Asia, Mesopotamia and other lands she was able to preserve her cultural heritage in the process of conquest and domination by the aggressive foreign enemy. As regards the oft-quoted charge of racial aloofness brought by the illustrious Alberuni against his Indian contemporaries facing the dire threat of militant Islam, it is explained, if not justified, by the parallel example of China and Japan in recent times being forced to shut themselves completely from the outside world under the threat of Western colonialism.

The historical parallel with Mediaeval Europe drawn to India's disadvantage by Mr. R. C. Dutt (who is quoted with approval by Dr. R. C. Majumdar), while bringing out some points of at least partial similarity (social divisions, backwardness of the masses, decline of literature and art, and the rise of modern vernaculars in place of the old classical tongues) between the two lands, misses some fundamental differences between them, while giving an inaccurate explanation of the one alleged dissimilarity. Thus in the first place while Mediaeval Europe (A.D. 476-1494) saw the addition of three new peoples (the Celts, the Teutons, and the Slavs) to the community of Europe and the incorporation of their contributions to the common stock of European civilisation, India during the corresponding centuries witnessed the passing away of vast regions (Afghanistan, Central Asia, Malay and Indonesia) till then belonging to her cultural zone to the opposite camp. Again while Mediaeval Europe in spite of the cohesive conception of a single empire and a common Christian faith found herself split up into two great Empires and Christian churches, while Western Europe in particular in the face of the over-shadowing

conception of the Roman church and the Roman Empire witnessed the rise of particularism in the shape of the territorial principality with a regional Church, India wanting in the idea of a united empire except as a vague tradition and in a common ecclesiastical order with a strong organisation was divided into States whose mutual rivalries failed to produce the European counterpart of strong territorial units, but on the contrary paved the way for their common subjection to the foreign yoke. If Europe in the sixteenth century was able to develop the principle of nationality (such that the New Monarch of the Age of the Reformation was able to establish within his territory a close politico-ecclesiastical system claiming supremacy alike in secular and ecclesiastical affairs and turning his subjects into an exclusive group with distinctive features of its general life), this was due not to the fusion of the feudal nobility with the masses, but to the overwhelming growth of the principle of the territorial unit. How the European class-divisions in spite of the absence of castes perpetuated themselves till the very end of the Middle Ages, is shown by the division then existing between the patricians and the trade-guilds in the towns and between the landed aristocracy and the peasantry in the rural areas. We have convincing illustrations of the great gulf separating the European social classes in such dreadful happenings as the Jacquerie of France in 1357 and the Peasants' Revolt in England in 1381. For the growth of a truly national sentiment the people of the European States with the single exception of England had to wait until the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century and the movements inspired by it in the other continental lands in the first half of the nineteenth century swept away all vestiges of a privileged hereditary aristocracy. In India, on the other hand, although the example of the Ranas of Mewar and still more of Shivaji, the Maratha, in later times proved the possibility of developing territorial units in spite of the handicap of caste divisions, the sentiment of a common nationality because of the greater vastness and complexity of the problem has still to battle with various fissiparous tendencies.¹⁴

As regards the alleged symptoms of social degradation of the Indians during this period, the quotations from Manu prove, if anything, that the disabilities of women there referred to went back to the early centuries before and after Christ. These quotations, again, give us only an one-sided and therefore inaccurate picture of the whole. Indeed, we find Manu as well as Yājñavalkya accompanying rules and maxims about the disabilities of women with admission of their legal and social rights, as when the doctrine of the wife's incapacity for property is staged along with her title to her special type of property (*strīdhana*) as well as the

¹⁴ The above refs. to the characteristic features of the European Middle Ages are quoted from the work *The European Inheritance*, ed. by Sir Ernest Barker, Sir George Clark and Prof. P.

Voucher, Vol. I, Part III entitled *The Middle Ages*, (pp. 433-37), and Vol. III, Part VIII entitled *Review and Epilogue* (pp. 325-28).

right of the mother and the sister (and afterwards of the widow) to inherit the property of their deceased male relations, or when the wife's absolute duty of submission to her husband is mentioned along with her full right to maintenance even in the event of her supersession on specified grounds (the marriage-tie being pointedly declared to be indissoluble) and the right even of an adulterous wife to recover her former status after performance of the appropriate penance, or when the direction about the marriage of a girl at a comparatively early age by the selection of her guardians is accompanied by a provision for her choice of a husband in special circumstances. The solemn admonitions of Manu and Yājñavalkya for the honourable treatment of women are not, as has been stated, mere 'honeyed phrases' masking their degradation, for apart from the permission given to the husband to correct his erring wife in specified ways, specific rules which are enforced by legal and penitential sanctions are laid down by these authorities for their proper care. Coming to the later *Smṛitis* the re-marriage of widows which is absolutely banned by Manu is permitted by Nārada and Parāśara as well as the *Agni Purāṇa* in a famous text allowing the wife to remarry in five special circumstances. Again although some of the later *Smṛitis* enjoin upon the widow self-immolation on the funeral pyre of her husband as an alternative to her life of ascetic self-restraint, others forbid it wholly or in part.

Turning to the next point, we have to mention that already in an inscription¹⁵ from the Hazaribagh district of Bihar written in characters of the Aśokān period a *devadāsī* is mentioned by name along with her lover, while Kalidāsa¹⁶ in the fifth (?) and Hiuen Tsang¹⁷ in the seventh century refer to such girls in the service of the Mahākālā temple at Ujjayinī and of a shrine of the Sun-god in a city 'east of Sindh' in the Indus delta respectively. We have further to remember that the lives and occupations of prostitutes constitute, according to an authoritative tradition, a distinct (sixth) section of the science of erotics (*Kāmasāstra*) which was separated from the other sections of an earlier work by a certain Dattaka at the instance of the prostitutes of the city of Pāṭaliputra, this early work being itself held to have been based on an abridged version of the archetypal science attributed to the Creator. According to the same tradition the whole science consisting of seven sections was finally restored by Vātsyāyana, the author of the *Kāmasūtra* (third or fourth century A. D.).¹⁸ In the Golden Age of classical Sanskrit literature the famous drama called the *Mṛichchhakaṭika* has for its heroine an accomplished and virtuous courtsean, while stories of prostitutes of both the better and the ordinary

¹⁵ Vide Ramgarh (Jogimara) Cave Inscr. (AST, AR, 1903-04, p. 122).

¹⁶ Vide Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* I 36.

¹⁷ Vide Watters, *On Yuan-Chwang*, Vol. II p. 254.

¹⁸ For the traditional account of the origin and development of the science of erotics, vide Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra* I 9-19.

classes are found in the famous prose-romance, the *Daśakumāra-charita* of Daṇḍin.¹⁹ We may further observe that the temple sculptures from the tenth to the twelfth centuries which have justly been condemned for their bad taste only reproduce in stone the various sex-poses of the *Kāmasāstra*, the *mithuna* motif in these sculptures being traceable at last to extant remains of Buddhist and Jaina religious buildings of the Kushan period.²⁰ On the other hand we may admit with Sardar K. M. Panikkar that the further extension of the *devadāsī* system, the composition of poems on the lives of prostitutes by reputed writers of the classical Sanskrit literature and the large-scale representation of erotic scenes in the temple-sculptures, indicate the emergence of the above symptoms on a magnified scale in later times. Whether this signified a general loosening of the moral code among the upper and middle classes of the Indian society, and if so, how far it helped to undermine India's powers of resistance against the foreign enemy are questions on which we find it impossible to supply a definite answer. But that there was no dearth of creative activity among the Indians of this period in the fields of literature and art is expected to be proved in the course of this chapter.

IV. ECONOMIC FACTOR. The general statement of two of the authors quoted above, namely Sardar K. M. Panikkar and Dr. A. L. Srivastava about the economic prosperity of the country during the period from the tenth to the twelfth centuries is not supported by any evidence whatever, while their reference to the great disparity of wealth between the upper classes living in the towns and the ordinary villager is a historical truism which is applicable almost to every period of India's long history. It is, therefore, necessary to go into these questions in some detail. We may observe at the outset that the exceptional economic prosperity of the country during the period immediately preceding the Turkish conquest is proved by the combined evidence of the contemporary Indian as well as foreign (Muslim, Chinese and European) notices. Agriculture, to begin with, was highly developed, the variety of cereals and other food grains, or medicinal plants and aromatic products that is mentioned in the contemporary works being as remarkable as in the preceding centuries. In particular Magadha is mentioned for its richness in rice, Kashmir for its grapes and saffron, Malabar for its spices, and the Kanarese tract for sandal. The knowledge of scientific agriculture is indicated by the minute classifications of crops and fields in the standard lexicons. Irrigation-

¹⁹ Vide *Daśakumāra-charita*.

²⁰ *Mithuna* (literally meaning man-and-woman) is the conventional description of an Indian art motif depicting a pair of the two opposite sexes in various amatory poses. On the antiquity of erotic temple-sculptures and *mithuna* motif vide the article *The Mithuna in Indian Art* by Prof. O. C. Gangoly in the periodical *Rupam*, April-July 1923. It has been suggested

(Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India* p. 172) that the *mithuna* figures at Konarak signify union with the divine and alternatively they reflect actual orgiastic rites associated with the Sun. But the perverse forms and general prevalence of the erotic scenes suggest that they were more probably undertaken as a prophylactic against evil.

works were constructed for the improvement of agriculture, the most famous of these being the great anicut across the Kāveri river below Śrīraṅgam which is attributed to one of the Chola rulers. During the same period the pearl fisheries of the Pāṇḍya kingdom were the centre from which, according to the Venetian traveller Marco Polo, pearls were spread all over the world. As regards industries Gujarat produced cotton stuffs and dressed animal-skins in such abundance that they were exported to the lands of the Arabs, while its exquisitely inlaid and skilfully embroidered leather-mats as well as gold-embroidered cushions fetched very high prices in foreign markets: leather of excellent qualities as well as raw cotton and fine cotton stuffs were exported from Tana in the Konkan: the best and the most delicate cotton stuffs came from the kingdom of Warangal. In the branch of external trade it appears from the accounts of the foreign writers that 'Malabar' (the Coromandel coast) was a sort of clearing house for the goods of the East and the West, its ports being visited by ships from China on the one side and the Persian Gulf and the Arabian coast on the other: the ports of Malabar and Gujarat likewise were centres of international trade: there were besides great trading corporations like the Nānādeśis of South India whose commercial operations are shown by the evidence of extant inscriptions to have extended to Burma and Sumatra. The extraordinary opulence of the Indian cities and richness of the Indian royal courts and temples resulting no doubt from the flourishing economic condition of the country is testified to by all the records of this period, indigenous as well as foreign. The contemporary lexicons refer to the great variety of dresses and ornaments as well as domestic furniture in use at least among the upper classes of society, while more specific references are found in the literary works to the affluence of the great merchants and the chief courtesans in the cities. How the prevailing craze for luxury infected even the petty officials in the rural areas is told by the Kashmirian satirist Kshemendra in his *Narmamālā*. The amazing range and extent of luxury at the royal courts is proved by the extraordinary full and vivid account of the king's dress and toilette, his banquets, his conveyances and other furniture as well as his residences that we find in the eleventh century work called the *Mānasollāsa* attributed to the Chālukya king of Western India Someśvara iv. The more matter-of-fact descriptions of royal courts and processions by the contemporary foreign writers as well as the representations of such scenes in the temple sculptures of this period point to the same conclusion. On the other hand we are left almost completely in the dark about the economic condition of the mass of freemen including the peasant working at his plough, the artisan employed in his small workshop, and the trader engaged in his petty business.²¹

²¹ The above account is abstracted from the present writer's chapter on *Economic Condition* (Chapter XVIII) in

the work *The History and Culture of the Indian People* Vol. V.

V. RELIGIOUS FACTOR. It is a fact well attested by the valuable testimony of Alberuni²² that the learned Brāhmaṇas of his time believed in the unity of God, while the common people were content with image-worship (which is not the same as the worship of idols) and various religious rites and festivals. But it was not due, as has been held by Mr. R. C. Dutt, to the selfish act of the Brāhmaṇas of later times in shutting out the life-giving religion of the *Upanishads* from the masses. In truth the practice of image-worship, which originally came to the Vedic Aryans through their contact with the indigenous races, was established even before the Christian era, and the subsequent multiplication of image-types with the attendant rise of a complex religious ritual was not the deliberate creation of designing Brāhmaṇas, but was a phenomenon shared fully by Paurāṇic and Tāntric Hinduism with later Buddhism styled Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna.²³ Again, while the denial of the higher knowledge of the *Upanishads* to the Sūdras may be traced back to the oldest *Smṛitis* which confined Vedic study to the three higher classes alone, the literature of the *Purāṇas* and *Tantras* actually opened to the Sūdras full participation in religious knowledge and practices. Above all there is good reason to believe that the Paurāṇic and Tāntric cults with their abundant pantheon and composite ritual fully satisfying the religious cravings of the masses, so far from heralding the decadence of the Indian people, turned out to be one of the pillars of their strength in the life and death struggle with the foreign invader. This is proved not only by the unbiassed testimony of competent foreign historians in our own times²⁴, but is also indicated by the facts of history which point to the extensive survival of the indigenous institutions under the yoke of dynasties of the alien faith. It was left not to the priest-ridden and ritual-burdened lower orders of Hindu society, but to the Buddhist and crypto-Buddhist communities of Sindh and

²² Vide Sachau, *Alberuni's India* pp. 113, 122.

²³ On the origin and early history as well as ideology of image-worship among the Indians vide now the work *The development of Hindu Iconography* by Dr. Jitendranath Banerjee (2nd edition, Calcutta 1936), pp. 41-42, 47-50, 71-75, 78-79, 85-101, 571-74.

²⁴ According to Elphinstone (*History of India*, p. 313) the causes of the slow progress of Islam in India were firstly, a powerful priesthood closely connected with the government and deeply revered by their countrymen; secondly, a religion inter-woven with the laws and manners of the people and exercis-

ing an irresistible influence over their very thoughts; and thirdly a horror of change and a passive courage best suited for an impetuous attack to spend its force. Even the divisions of the Indian princes, we are further told by the same authority, helped to prolong their resistance and weaken the invaders' strength. In the opinion of M.T. Titus (*Indian Islam*, pp. 7-8) the partial success of the attempt to islamise India was due to the fact that the Hindus were well organised in their social and religious life under the domination of priest and caste in contrast with the imperfect organisation of their political life.

Bengal, to betray the country's cause to the foreign invader.²⁵

Passing to the symptoms of religious degradation of the Indians, as alleged by Sardar K.M. Panikkar, we have first to state that the Tāntric beliefs and practices were incorporated in the theological systems of Brahmanism and Buddhism at least as far back as in the late Gupta period, thus proving (as has been well observed) that they satisfied some of the basic spiritual needs of a heterogeneous population comprising different racial stocks as well as social and cultural strata. In truth the *Tantras* justify themselves by the plea that unlike the *Vedas* which are a sealed book to the lower classes they are open to all irrespective of caste, creed or sect. The Tāntric cult teaches an elaborate series of practices (mystic prayers and diagrams, poses of fingers, postures of hands and so forth) which are primarily intended to enable the worshipper to invoke and then identify himself with his patron deity. Tāntrism likewise teaches rules of conduct (*āchāras*) depending upon the standing of the worshipper in an ascending scale of spiritual values such that while the lowest order of worshippers, (called *paśu* or the natural man) is required strictly to abide by the rules of social morality and to perform the prescribed rites and ceremonies, the higher order of worshippers (the *vīra* or the heroic soul) is permitted to disregard social conventions and to practise the much criticised left-hand path (*vāma-mārga*) involving the ritual use of five principles (*pañchatattvas*) commonly called the five M's (*pañchamakāras*), and the highest order of worshippers, (the *divya* or the divine man who is above all dualities) is held to transcend the likes and dislikes of earthly life like God himself, to whom all things are equal. In the parallel system of Tāntric Buddhism (*vajrayāna*), similarly, the worshipper is first taught to use mystic prayers and syllables, hand-poses and so forth, and he is only then permitted to adopt sex-yogic practices for qualifying himself for the goal of supreme bliss (*mahāsukha*).²⁶ Admitting the latitude allowed for performance of such questionable practices by the scriptures of the sects concerned, we have no means of judging the extent of their influence in corrupting religion and sapping the vitality of the people during the centuries of their struggle with the foreigner.

Coming to Sardar Panikkar's alleged symptom of India's religious degradation, we think that the satirical pictures of false religious teachers

²⁵ For a short sketch of the unpatriotic part played by the Buddhists of Sindh at the time of Muhammad bin Quasim's invasion vide now *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol III p. 170 and Bibliography on pp. 673-74. The chapter on the wrath of 'Lord Nirañjana' in the two old Bengali works called the *Śūryapurāṇa* and the *Dharmapūjāvidhāna* (edited by Dr. S.B. Dasgupta under the title *Obscure religious cults as background of Bengali literature*, pp. 305-06) reflects the

exaltation of the followers of the Dharma cult at the overthrow of Brahmanism in Bengal by the Turkish invaders.

²⁶ The above account of Tāntric beliefs and practices is summarized from the two works *The History and Culture of the Indian People* Vol IV Chap XI sub-section E entitled *Tantrik religion* by Mr. H.D. Bhattacharya and *Introduction to Tantric Buddhism* by Dr. S.B. Dasgupta, pp. 23-24.

and ascetics in the works of the Kashmirian polyhistorian Kshemendra and the dramatist Kṛishṇamiśra should be taken to represent not the whole, but one extreme section of these social types. That the monastic orders of this period at any rate were not wanting in literary activities is proved by the example of the Jaina monks who distinguished themselves by writing extensive commentaries on the canon and biographies of saints as well as quasi-historical dramas. One name which stands out pre-eminently among them is that of Hemachandra, 'the Omniscient One of the Kali Age', who wrote works on almost every branch of Sanskrit learning besides those relating to his own sect. To the above we may add the example of the Buddhist *Siddhāchāryas*, authors of the mystic songs called *charyās* and *dohās* as well as the commentators on the Buddhist *Tantras*. Of the spiritual activities of the monks during the same period we have convincing proofs in the careers of Rāmānuja, the *guru* of the Hoysala King Viṣṇuvardhana of Mysore, of Hemachandra, the *guru* of Kumārapāla, King of Gujarat, and of Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna, the Indian reformer of Tibetan Buddhism.

VI. LITERARY AND ARTISTIC FACTORS. Without denying what Sardar Panikkar states to be the glaring defects of Sanskrit artificial poetry of the period under review, we may mention that the same centuries witnessed the production of works of admittedly high merit like the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* of the Kashmirian chronicler Kalhaṇa, the *Gītāgovinda* of the poet Jayadeva and the *Prabodhachandrodaya* of the dramatist Kṛishṇamiśra. To the same period belongs the most extensive collection of stories in Sanskrit literature, namely the *Kathāsaritsāgara* of the poet Somadeva. Equal or even greater success attended the Indian efforts in the branches of what is called scientific literature. In lexicography we have the great names of Halāyudha, Yādavaprakāśa and above all Hemachandra, in grammar those of Śaraṇadeva, Vardhamāna and Hemachandra, in civil and religious law (*Smṛiti*) those of Vijñāneśvara, (the founder of the most important school of Hindu law in mediaeval and modern times), Aparāka and Devaṇṇabhaṭṭa. In philosophy we have to mention the famous names of Rāmānuja, the founder of the *Viśiṣṭādvaita* school of *Vedānta* philosophy, as well as of Gaṅgeśa and Śrīdhara, who developed the systems of *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy respectively. In science the most conspicuous names are those of Chakrapāṇidatta, the author of a well-known work on Hindu therapeutics, and Bhāskarāchārya who carried further (although in the orthodox tradition of Brahmagupta) the older studies in mathematics and astronomy.²⁷ It seems to follow from the above that there was no dearth of literary and scientific activity during this so-called period of Indian cultural decadence, although it might and doubtless did suffer some decline as judged by the old creative standards.

²⁷ For full refs. vide Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Literatur*, Vol. III; Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*;

ature; Susil Kumar De, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, Chaps. VI-VII.

Coming to the developments of art and architecture, we have to mention that the exclusive reference by Sardar Panikkar to the degradation of taste in the temple sculptures of this period fails to do justice to their other striking, if not original, characteristics. Of the three styles of architecture which rose to full maturity during those centuries the North-Indian or Indo-Aryan (technically called *rekha*) style attained special development in six regions, namely, (1) Orissa, (2) Khajuraho, (3) Rajasthan and the western parts of Madhya Pradesh, (4) Gujarat and Kathiawar, (5) the Deccan, and lastly, (6) the Gwalior region. Among the Orissan temples which can be chronologically divided into three periods, namely 'the Early' (c. A.D. 750-900), 'the Middle' (c. A.D. 900-1100), and 'the Late' (c. A.D. 1100-1250), the second phase opened with that 'gem of Orissan architecture' (the Mukteśvara temple), and it reached its maturity in the great temples of Lingarāja at Bhuvanesvar and Jagannātha at Puri, while the third period produced 'the grandest achievement of the Eastern school of architecture,' (the Sun-temple at Konarak). The Khajuraho group of temples belonging to a single period and characterised by marked individuality of style has been justly praised for the elegance and refinement as well as originality of its architectural features. The remains of the temples of Rajasthan and the western part of Madhya Pradesh, such as are preserved in the mosques built by the early Muslim rulers out of their spoils, testify to a flourishing and artistic development of the post-Gupta architectural styles. The group of temples in Gujarat and Kathiawar which were mostly built in the interval of peace and prosperity between the sack of Somnath by Sultan Mahmud (1025-26 A.D.) and the conquest of the whole State by Alauddin Khalji (1298) were the spontaneous expression of the religious feelings of the whole community, and they furnish even in their present state of neglect ripe examples of the innate artistic genius of the local craftsmen. The South Indian (Dravidian) style of architecture of which the first phase may be traced back to the Pallavas (c. A.D. 600-900) underwent during this period two successive developments. The Chola phase (c. A.D. 900-1150) reached its climax in the two great monuments which marked 'the culmination of South Indian architecture', namely, the great temple of Rājārāja I at Tanjore (c. A.D. 1100), and the less well-known but equally gorgeous temple of Rājendra I at Gaṅgaikoṇḍa-Cholapuram (c.A.D.1125), while the later Chālukyan (otherwise called the Hoysala) style attained a luxuriant growth in the Mysore tract during the period from c. 1100 to 1300, and it reached its climax in the great temple of Hoysalesvara at Halebid of which it has been said that it is 'the supreme climax of Indian architecture in its most prodigal plastic manifestation.' Turning to the branch of Indian plastic art, we can distinguish after a competent authority between six schools of mediaeval sculpture with their distinctive characteristics. These are the schools of Western India (Gujarati and Rajput), Central India (Chandella and Haihaya), Eastern India (Bihar,

Bengal and Orissa), the Himalayan tract, the Deccan and South India. In the branch of pictorial art we can distinguish between two important schools of miniature painting on palm-leaf manuscripts, namely that of Western India dating from the twelfth to the fourteenth century and that of Eastern India extending from the ninth or tenth to the fourteenth or fifteenth century, which mark though in different ways the continuance of the old classical tradition. The above brief review points to a richness and variety of artistic activity not certainly indicative of an age of decadence.²⁸

Summary

Summing up the results of the foregoing discussion, we may begin by stating that the general overthrow of India's political independence at the end of the ancient period of our history was not due, as has been held, to a wholesale decadence of her civilisation, or even to a marked degradation of her social life in comparison with the earlier times. To understand this great historical movement we have to consider carefully the influence of the various factors at work in the process. Politically, the exaggerated statements about the complete breakdown of India's political unity and the complete apathy of her people in the face of the great danger from outside are negated by the strong defence put up by most of the States before their fall, as well as the instances of repeated and continued resistance of individual chiefs and communities before they were forced to bow to the foreign yoke. India's real weakness lay in the perpetual rivalry of a few powerful States preventing their effective combination against the common enemy. Internally, there is no reason to think that the period preceding the Muslim conquest witnessed a change for the worse in the character of the ruling bureaucracy, and still less that there was a general drift towards an unchecked bureaucracy or autocracy in place of the balanced constitution of earlier times. The real defect of the Indian States lay in the influence of the powerful feudatory families constituting a constant threat to the security and stability of the central government. As regards the military factor it cannot justly be maintained that the Indians during the long history of their struggle with the foreign enemy failed to learn the lessons of the new system of warfare because of the exclusive spirit of caste or of the spell of an unparalleled geographical isolation, this failure being more probably due to the lack of a leader with sufficient capacity for the task.

²⁸ The above account is based upon the works *Indian Architecture*, *Buddhist and Hindu* (Chaps. XVII-XVIII, XXI-XXVI and XXIX) by Percy Brown (2nd revised and enlarged ed.), *Indian Sculpture* (Chap. III) by Stella Kramrisch, and *Jaina Miniature Paintings from Western India* (Part I Chaps.

I-III) by Dr. Moti Chandra. For some further valuable notices of Indian architecture and sculpture during the period from the 8th and the 9th to the 13th century, vide Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of India*, London 1954, (pp. 40-45).

Again, while the inferiority of the Indians in strategy, tactics and military equipment is an admitted fact, their other defects can be fully realised only by a contrast with their adversaries. Thus unlike the armies of the invaders fighting under one undivided command, those of the Indians largely consisted of contingents of the feudatory chiefs fighting under their own leaders. Again, unlike the invaders who derived their will to victory from an unparalleled religious enthusiasm, the Indian fighting classes were inclined as a rule to fight more for the exhibition of individual valour and vindication of personal honour than for collective success. Similarly, in contrast with the shock tactics used by the most successful of the foreign conquerors for paralysing the native resistance, the Indian leaders often betrayed surprising lack of vigilance. The instances of Indian treachery to the common cause contrasted sharply with those of the successful employment of the arms of clever diplomacy and subtle propaganda by the enemy to confound his antagonists. As regards the social factor, the views that the Indian social system in its later phase involved the conversion of academic doctrines into realities and that it marked the triumph of a cunning and unscrupulous priesthood in the attempt to establish its supremacy in violation of the letter and spirit of the ancient scriptures and in the teeth of the determined opposition of the other classes, are both disproved by the facts of history. In truth, the later social developments with their inevitable tightening of the disabilities of special classes, instead of being the chief cause of India's ruin, helped her (and herein lay their principal historical justification) to salvage much of her ancient cultural heritage from the imminent danger of wreckage by a relentless and determined foe. The parallel with the history of Western Europe in the late Middle and early Modern Ages only shows that India's failure to develop the principle of nationality was due to the imperfect growth of the principle of the territorial unit, and not to the want of fusion between the ruling and other classes because of caste differences. Again, the *Smritis* cannot justly be charged with supporting an unqualified degradation of the position of women; for while the earlier works accompany the rules and maxims about women's disabilities with the admission of their legal and social rights, the later works hold divergent views on such fundamental questions as the remarriage of widows and their obligation of self-immolation on the funeral pyres of their husbands. As regards the alleged symptoms of India's moral degradation, they may all be traced back to the early centuries of the Christian era, although it is a fact that these appeared in a magnified form in the later times with what repercussions on India's powers of resistance against the common enemy it is not possible to decide clearly. As for the economic factor, all contemporary evidence, both indigenous and foreign, testifies to the high prosperity of the country following the great development of its agriculture, industry and trade in the period under notice. But while the upper classes (and especially royalty) are known to have rolled

in luxury, we have no information about the economic condition of the rest of the population. Of the effect of the unequal distribution of wealth between the classes in turning the scales of victory in the fight against the foreign enemy, we are not in a position to say anything because of want of sufficient information. Coming lastly to the literary and artistic factors, we have to mention that the period preceding the Muslim conquest produced a considerable output of literary and scientific works, while it witnessed continuations of the traditional architectural styles and schools of sculpture and painting, thus indicating that the old literary and artistic impulses were still living inspirations throughout our land.

“For a complete account (with full references) of the factors of downfall of Ancient Indian Political Civilization quoted above under the heads (a) *Political factor* (b) *Military factor* (c) *Social factor* (d) *Economic factor* (e) *Religious factor* and (f) *Literary and artistic factors*, vide firstly Vol. V Chapter XIII of *The History and Culture of the Indian People*; secondly, the chapter on Social Conditions during the period (200 B.C. to A.D. 1300) in chronological sequence in Vol. II Chapter XV of the *Comprehensive History of India* and in Vol. III Chapter XX, as well as Vol. IV Chapter XII, Vol. V Chapter XVI of *The History and Culture of the Indian People*.

Additions & Corrections for pp. 324-25:—

¹³ Cf. (a) *Jāt* No 340 p. 129 (slaves and labourers counted among a settler's possessions); (b) *ibid* No. 390 p. 300 (slaves and labourers contrasted with a begging monk); (c) *ibid* No. 447 p. 50 (slaves and labourers of a pious Brāhmaṇa), (d) *ibid* No. 484 p. 277 (slaves and labourers engaged by a Brāhmaṇa for guarding his fields).

¹⁴ The comparison between the status of slaves on the one hand and of free labourers as well as despised castes on the other is made among others by R. Fick in his work *The Social Organisation in North-Eastern India* (Eng. tr. of the original German work, pp. 306, 312-13).

¹⁵ Vide Rock Edict XI and Pillar Edict VII (kind treatment of slaves inculcated by Aśoka). We may quote two other instances in the present context: these are the instances of the male slave Dāsaka and the female slave Puṇṇā (otherwise called Puṇṇikā) who are mentioned as authors of *gāthās* in *Theragāthā* p. 4 and *Therīgāthā* p. 123. This shows that slaves evidently after liberation by their masters could rise

to the rank of saints in the early Buddhist Church. It deserves to be mentioned that the two persons named above are actually stated in a late Buddhist tradition (Vide *Paramattha-dīpani* pp. 73, 200) to have been liberated by their master Anāthapindika, a well-known lay disciple of the Buddha.

¹⁶ Vide (a) *Pinḍanijjuttī* 319 (slave for debt); (b) *Vavahāra Bhāṣya*, 2, 207 *Mahānisiha* p. 28 (slaves because of famine).

¹⁷ Vide *Vavahāra Bhāṣya* I. p. 131. *Uttarādhyayana-Sūtra* 3, 17 (slaves ranked with agricultural land, dwelling-house, gold and cattle as objects of enjoyment); (b) *Brihatkalpa Bhāṣya* I 125 (slaves included with fields, building etc. in ten kinds of external possessions). Vide further *Niśītha—chūrṇī* II p. 741 and *Uvāsagadasāo* I 7 for ref. to big land-owners and rich tradesmen. All the above refs. are quoted by the present writer from the work *Life in Ancient India as depicted in the Jaina canons* by Dr. Jagdish Chandra Jain, pp. 106-08.

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STUDIES IN INDIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

by Dr. U.N. Ghoshal, M.A., Ph.D

(Orient Longmans, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, 1957, pp. 538)

Dr. U.N. Ghoshal is one of our senior scholars of Indian history who, after retirement from active teaching work as Professor, are still carrying on their work of research and of bringing before the people the result of their investigations. As the author of the *History of Hindu Political Theories*, *Contributions to the History of the Hindu Revenue System*, *the Agrarian System of Ancient India* and a *History of Hindu Public Life*, Dr. Ghoshal is among the top-ranking scholars who are seeking to unravel India's past in the domain of not only actual achievement but also of theories and ideologies. The present work is a substantial one running up to over 500 pages, and we have in it a number of valuable and suggestive papers on different aspects of Indian history and culture in the different periods. In this work, which is in a way a restatement of some of his views, embodying as it does portions of previous articles which Dr. Ghoshal had produced some years ago, the variety and quality of the contents form quite a noteworthy addition to our exact knowledge of certain aspects of ancient Indian thought and culture.

The book consists of four Parts, each divided into a number of chapters (the total number of chapters comes up to 17) and the titles of these parts would indicate the scope of the work.

Part I is on "Studies in Ancient Historiography", in which the method of utilising relevant passages in Vedic, early Buddhist and *Purāṇa* texts for salvaging precious facts of positive history are discussed. In this part also Dr. Ghoshal has given a sort of an appreciative study of and commentary upon two of the most important historical compositions of ancient India—the *Harṣa-Carita* of Bāṇa-Bhaṭṭa, and the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa. In this part a good deal of information which has not yet become the common property of students of history has been given about the historical background of Vedic and Upanishadic texts, and the theories as well as methodologies of prominent workers in the domain of *Purāṇa* chronology are also critically discussed. It is interesting to find that one source for secular history in the Vedas in the *Nārāsaṁsī* verses (*dānastutis*) and these are panegyrics of ancient Kings (the word literally means "praises of men"—and this was an old Indo-Iranian

custom to have such panegyrics, because the equivalent word in Avestan, *Nairosangha*, is also found). I only wish that Dr. Ghoshal's criticism of the methodology followed by F.G. Pargiter, H.C. Raychaudhuri, S.N. Pradhan, A.D. Pusalker, G.S. Bose and P.L. Bhargava were discussed in greater detail. The methodology of some of these scholars would hardly stand the test of sober historical investigation and a scholar of the authority of Dr. Ghoshal might have given his final appraisal, so that certain main chronologies which have been suggested by some of the above scholars, could be shown to be untenable. But we hope that in a subsequent edition, or, preferably, in a fresh article, Dr. Ghoshal would do this.

The chapters on the *Harṣa-Carita* and on the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* are exceedingly readable, and the political and cultural history in its human background is very convincingly brought out. In this connection we are glad to note that Dr. Ghoshal has also appreciated the fine work in Hindi by Dr. V.S. Agrawala on the *Harṣa-Carita*, in which he makes the age of Harṣavardhana come up to us in its very living form. I think this chapter is a very readable critical study of the *Harṣa-Carita*, and so also is the next chapter on Kalhaṇa's work.

Part II of Dr. Ghoshal's book discusses two topics—(1) Periods of Indian History and (2) Dynamics of Indian History. He rightly condemns the division of Indian History into three categorical periods like Hindu, Muslim and British or Christian. It is indeed to be admitted that all serious students of India do not follow this division any more. Although still the boundaries between ancient, mediaeval and modern periods in Indian history remain a little vague, nevertheless for practical purpose this is the best division. In the section on the Dynamics of Indian History, Dr. Ghoshal has given a rapid survey of the more important periods—the critical ages, so to say of the History of India.

Part III embodies some of the more important contributions of Dr. Ghoshal himself to ancient Indian polity. He has here dealt with the basic genius of ancient Indian polity, and has sought to find out political and constitutional significance of the various ceremonies which were in vogue in connection with the kingship and the kingly state in the Vedic Period, involving sacrifices like the *Rājasūya*, the *Punarabhiṣeka* and the *Aindramahābhiṣeka*. More interesting, because the matter goes to the fundamentals and even touches upon the bases of primitive Indo-European socio-political notions, are the conclusions on Vedic political institutions where he discusses terms like *Sabhā* and *Samiti*. He also takes into note the character of the ancient Indian Republics in so far as the subject can be studied from early Buddhist literature and from the writings of the Greeks who came to India after Alexander the Great. The status and functions of the king's ministers are also taken into consideration and Dr. Ghoshal gives his own interpretation of certain ancient Indian administrative terms and nomenclature, e.g. the Maurya terms (as in the inscriptions of Aśoka) like *Rājūka*, *Prādeśika* and *Yuta*, besides

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In Part IV, Dr. Ghoshal has touched upon four different topics—one is an objective appraisal of slavery in India right down to about 800 A.D., another on that gruesome rite of cult or religious suicide by trying to decapitate oneself in honour of the Divinity one worshipped, of which practice there are several literary evidences and evidences in art; in another chapter, he discusses the two personalities in ancient Bengal history, Divy and Bhīma, and suggests a number of problems for the Pāla period.

The last chapter within this part traces in what way there was political downfall of ancient India in its political side, and he has discussed it under six heads, *namely*, political, military, social, economic, religious and literary and artistic.

This work, therefore, from a bare survey of its contents given above, indicates its wide scope; and the material collected so very conscientiously, and the interpretations offered by Dr. Ghoshal with such a judicious objective attitude, will certainly commend them to all students of ancient Indian history and culture.

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STUDIES IN INDIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

by U.N. GHOSHAL, M.A., Ph.D.

Orient Longmans, Calcutta, 1957.

This imposing volume of more than five hundred pages collects together, in a thoroughly revised and convenient form, some of the well-known author's previous writings, and deals, as the title indicates, with certain interesting aspects of Indian history and culture. It consists of seventeen chapters, divided into four parts. The first part, which is a revised and enlarged version of his previous work on Indian Historiography, is the most extensive and informative, and perhaps the least controversial. After tracing the beginnings of historiography in the Vedic and Buddhist literature, it evaluates the current views on the historical tradition found in the *Purāṇas*, and proceeds to deal comprehensively and critically with Bāṇa's *Harṣa-carita* (pp. 68-145) and Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇi* (pp. 146-242). The second part of the work criticises the current schematic division of the so-called periods of Indian history. The third part is concerned with studies in ancient Indian polity, a subject in which for many years the author has specialised. After giving an exposition of what he considers to be the genius of this polity, the political significance of the Vedic ceremonies of royal consecration is discussed. We find then a critical study of the characteristics of republican and mixed constitutions, which prevailed from the sixth century B.C. to the third century A.D. This is followed by two chapters respectively on the status and functions of king's ministers in ancient Indian polity, and on ancient Indian administrative terminology. We know that some of these topics are highly controversial and involve a re-examination of previous views, but the author's approach, so far as we can judge, is as objective and critical as the materials at his disposal permit. The last part of the work deals with some interesting topics of more general interest, such as a critical and historical study of the institution of slavery down to 800 A.D., the curious rite of head-offering to the deity, and the career of Divya and Bhīma of ancient Bengal. This part of the work is rounded off with a chapter on the factors which caused the downfall of ancient Indian political civilisation.

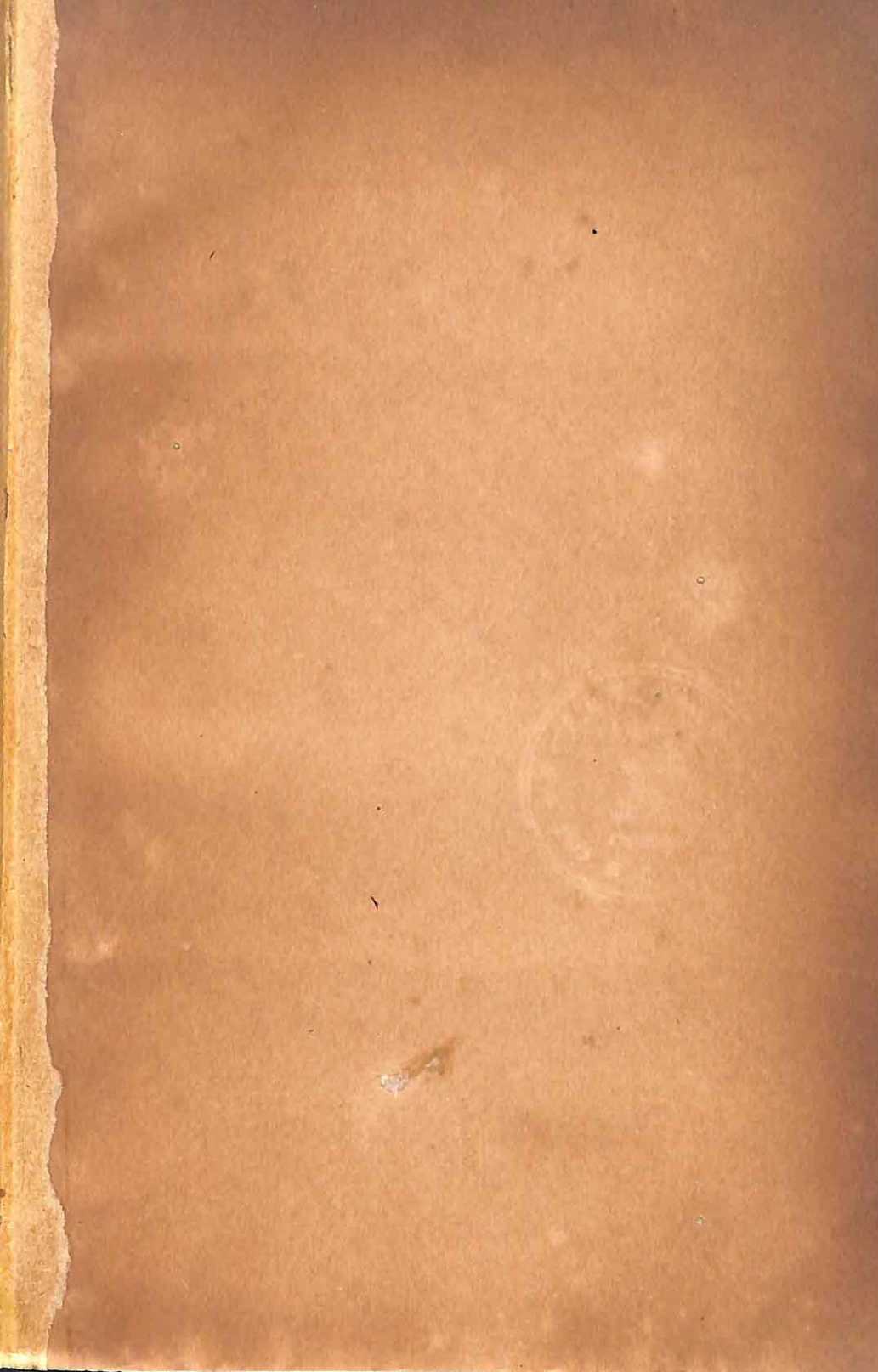
In range, versatility and soundness of scholarship the work, which gives us some of the mature views of the author, is indeed a distinct contribution to our knowledge of the difficult subjects embraced in its wide

scope. It is a pleasure to find that our author possesses a competent knowledge of Sanskrit which is often sadly lacking in some of our recognised Indian historians. His work, despite its acute criticism of previous views, is characterised throughout by well-balanced judgment and a keen common sense, the most uncommon of things.

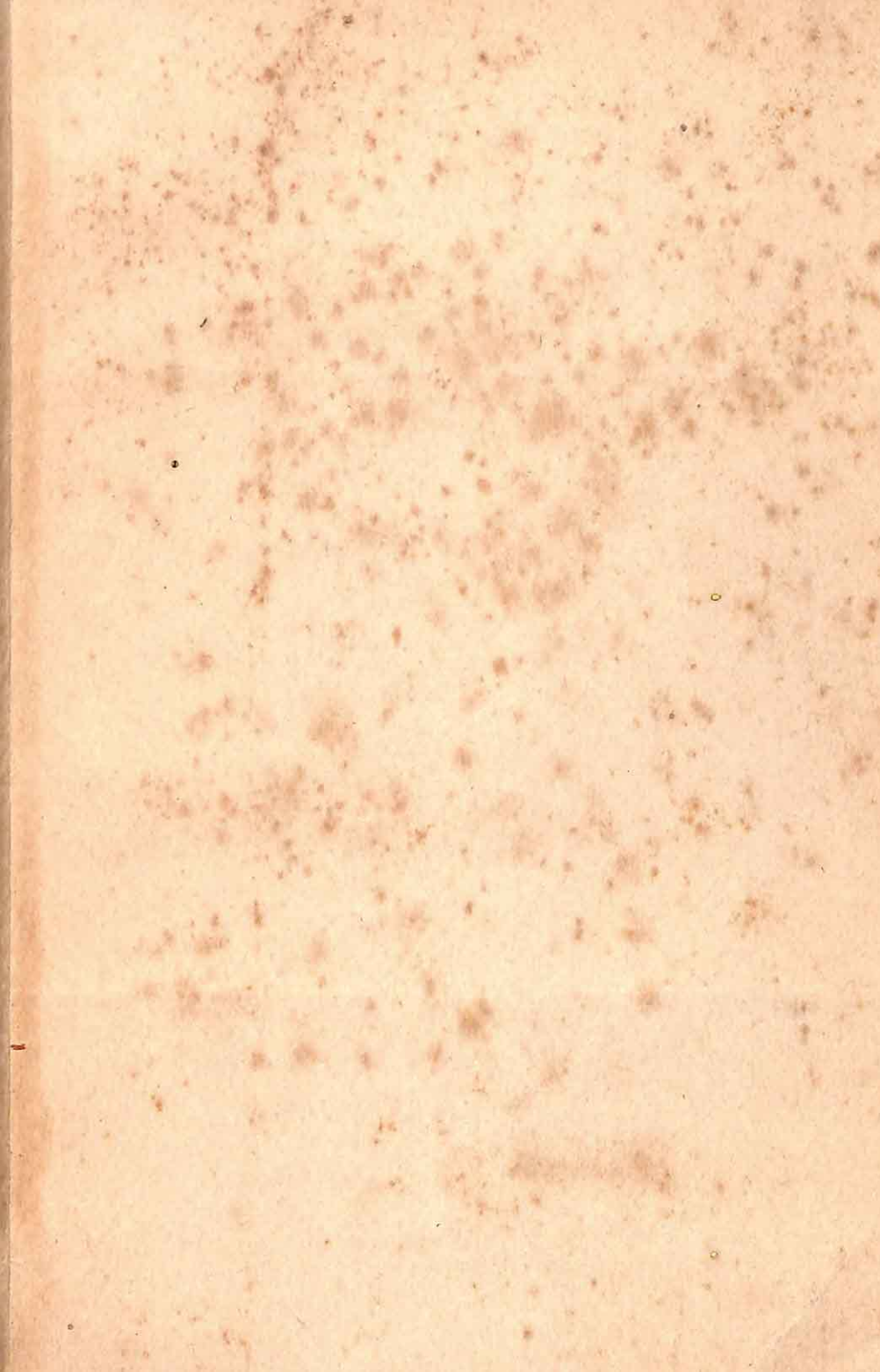
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